



First Steps Kindergarten

Policies and Procedures

Index

	Page
- Absence and Attendance Policy	4
- Access and Storage of Information	5
- Accidents and First Aid Procedures	6
- Admissions	8
- Adverse Weather	10
- Allergies and Allergic Reactions	12
- Animal Health and Safety Policy	14
- Babies and Tweenies	16
- Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying	18
- Bereavement	20
- Biting Policy	22
- CCTV Policy	23
- Children's Well-being in Nursery	25
- Chocking Prevention	26
- Complaints and Compliments	28
- Confidentiality / Data Protection (GDPR) Policy	30
- Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health	32
- Dealing with Discriminatory Behaviour	34
- Early Learning Opportunities Statement	36
- Fire Drill and Evacuation Policy	38
- Health and Safety Statement	40
- Hygiene and Nappy Changing Policy	42
- Immunisation	44
- Inclusion and Equality	45
- Infection Control	47
- Intimate Care	49
- Late Collection and Non-Collection	50
- Lockdown Policy	52
- Lost Child Procedure from Nursery	53
- Lost Child Procedure from Outings	54
- Manual Handling	56
- Medication	58
- No Smoking / Vaping Policy	60
- Nursery Security Policy	61
- Nutrition and Mealtimes	63
- Packed Lunch Policy	65
- Parental Partnership Policy	66
- Photography and Recording Device Use	68
- Risk Assessment Policy	70

- <u>Safer Recruitment of Staff</u>	71
- <u>Safety Checks</u>	73
- <u>Safe Sleep Policy</u>	75
- <u>Safe use of Mobile Devices and Mobile Technology Policy</u>	77
- <u>Settling In</u>	79
- <u>Sickness and Illness</u>	80
- <u>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</u>	83
- <u>Staff Development and Training</u>	85
- <u>Staff Working with Own Children / Close Relation</u>	87
- <u>Student Placement Policy</u>	87
- <u>Suncare</u>	89
- <u>Supervision of Children</u>	90
- <u>Supervision of Staff</u>	91
- <u>Supervision of Visitors</u>	93
- <u>Supporting Transitions</u>	94
- <u>Use of Dummies in Nursery Policy</u>	97
- <u>Visits and Outings Policy</u>	99
- <u>Well-being in the Nursery</u>	102
- <u>Whistleblowing Policy</u>	104

Absence and Attendance Policy

This policy outlines the procedures for managing and monitoring child attendance at First Steps Kindergarten, ensuring child safety, compliance with statutory requirements, and effective communication with families.

Notification of Absence:

1. Parents/carers are required to inform the nursery of any child absences, including the reason, whether due to illness, holidays, or other circumstances.
2. Notification should be made as soon as possible, ideally before the start of the session.
3. If the nursery is not informed of a child's absence by dinnertime on the first day, a courtesy call will be made to the parent/carer to determine the reason and expected return date.

Ongoing Absences:

1. If a child is absent for an extended period, further contact will be made to understand the reason and assess if any support is needed.
2. If no contact is made despite attempts, emergency contacts will be called to ensure the child and family are safe.

Monitoring Attendance:

1. Attendance is monitored in line with Early Years Statutory requirements.
2. If a child has frequent absences without valid reasons, a monitoring process will be initiated.
3. Support will be offered to the family, and, if necessary, external agencies may be consulted for additional support.

Contagious Illnesses:

1. The nursery has a duty to inform other families if a contagious illness is present within the setting, ensuring transparency and safety.
2. Parents are encouraged to report any contagious illnesses affecting their child.

Welfare Checks:

1. In cases of extended absence without any form of contact, and where all reasonable attempts to establish contact have failed, the nursery will consider initiating a welfare check in line with safeguarding protocols.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary to ensure compliance with current regulations and best practices. The nursery is committed to supporting families to maintain regular attendance and will work with parents/carers to address any concerns.

Access and Storage of Information

We are committed to maintaining an open access policy that encourages transparency and active participation from parents. This policy outlines how information is accessed, stored, and protected within our nursery.

Access to Policies and Procedures

Parents are welcome to view our full range of policies and procedures, which govern the operation of the nursery. These documents are available for review at any time on our website.

Access to Child Records

Parents have the right to view and contribute to the records we maintain about their child. This access is provided in compliance with applicable Data Protection laws, ensuring the confidentiality and security of all personal data.

Storage and Protection of Information

We are dedicated to securely storing all personal information relating to parents, children, and staff. This includes but is not limited to personal details, permissions, certificates, and photographic images. Our practices comply with current Data Protection legislation.

Archiving and Retention of Records

Records and documentation are maintained and stored in compliance with legal requirements. We currently retain records for a minimum of 21 years and three months. For more detailed information on our record-keeping practices, please refer to our Confidential / Data Protection (GDPR) Policy.

This policy is reviewed annually and will be updated in response to any changes in applicable laws or regulations.

Accidents and First Aid Procedures

At First Steps, we understand that accidents can be distressing for everyone involved. To ensure that all parties are supported and cared for, we follow clear procedures that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the children throughout their time at the nursery.

Accidents

Location of Accident Files: In each room, then stored in the office.

- The staff member who witnesses an accident, incident, or near-miss is responsible for recording it in the Accident File and reporting it to the nursery manager, when necessary. This should be done immediately after the accident, while details are still clear. The parent must be shown the Accident Report and asked to sign it upon collecting their child.
- Accident forms are reviewed termly to identify any patterns (e.g., repeated accidents with a particular child, area of the nursery, or time of day). Any identified patterns will be investigated by the nursery manager.
- The nursery manager will report serious accidents to the registered person for investigation and, if necessary, further action (e.g., risk assessments or reporting under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)).
- Accident files are retained for a minimum of 21 years and three months.
- If medical attention is required, a senior staff member will notify the parent(s) as soon as possible while ensuring the child receives appropriate care.
- The nursery manager will report serious accidents to Ofsted, if required.
- For significant head injuries, the parents will be called immediately. The child will be monitored closely to ensure their safety and well-being. If the injury is not severe, parents may not need to collect the child immediately, but a head injury form will be given to parents to help identify any potential symptoms and decide if medical assistance is needed.

Transporting Children to Hospital Procedure

- If the injury is severe, an ambulance should be called immediately. We will not attempt to transport the child.
- While waiting for the ambulance, we will contact the parent and arrange to meet them at the hospital.
- A senior staff member must accompany the child, taking with them registration forms, relevant medication sheets, medication, and the child's comforter. A member of the management team must also be informed immediately.
- Staff must stay calm at all times. Children who witness the incident may be distressed and will require reassurance and comfort.

First Aid

- First aid boxes are located in the Tweenie Room, Early Years Room, Kitchen, and Pre-School Building.
- The appointed person responsible for first aid is Ian Jones.

- All staff members are trained in paediatric first aid, with training updated every two years. Staff members who are not trained in first aid cannot deal with accidents or administer medicine. At least one staff member trained in first aid will be present at all times.
- A list of first aid trained staff is displayed in the main corridor. When children go on outings, at least one first aid trained member of staff will accompany them, carrying an appropriate first aid kit.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The nursery provides staff with PPE based on the task or activity. PPE must be worn during care tasks that involve contact with bodily fluids. PPE is also provided for handling chemicals and other tasks, and is reviewed regularly to ensure it is appropriate and effective. Staff will be consulted to accommodate allergies and individual needs when selecting PPE.

Incoming Injuries

- Any significant injuries or marks on a child upon arrival at the nursery or that occur during the day will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member.
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, and the discussion will be documented. Parents will have access to these records.
- If there is any uncertainty about the injury, we will contact the Cheshire East Consultation Service (CHeCS) for advice. The contact information is displayed in the office, staff room, and in each room.

Dealing with Blood

- Precautions must be taken when cleaning wounds, as some blood-borne conditions (e.g., Hepatitis or HIV) can be transmitted through blood.
- Disposable gloves should be worn, and blood should be wiped up with disposable cloths and sterilising fluid or freshly diluted bleach (one part bleach to ten parts water). The waste must be disposed of immediately after use.
- The nursery may not be aware of whether a child carries Hepatitis or is HIV positive.

Needle Puncture and Sharps Injury

- Great care must be taken when handling needles, broken glass, and other sharps. These items should be treated as contaminated waste and disposed of accordingly.
- If a needle is found, the local authority must be contacted for disposal.

Commitment to Health and Safety

The nursery prioritises health and safety and provides ongoing training to staff in line with current health and safety legislation. All staff are expected to follow best practices in accident management and first aid to ensure the well-being of children and staff members.

Admissions

First Steps Kindergarten is registered to care for children between the ages of 0 and 5. The overriding policy for admissions is detailed in our registration document. The following factors are considered when deciding which child can be offered a place in the nursery:

Admissions Criteria

- **Availability of Places:** Places are allocated based on staff/child ratios, the child's age, and our registration requirements.
- **Sibling Priority:** Children with siblings already enrolled at the nursery may receive priority for admission.
- **Waiting List:** Priority is given to children who have been on the waiting list the longest, provided there is availability.
- **Nursery Capacity:** The nursery will consider its ability to provide appropriate facilities for the child, including suitable staffing arrangements, before offering a place.
- **Full-Time vs. Part-Time:** Children requiring full-time places may receive preference over those requiring part-time attendance, depending on work commitments, room occupancy, and availability.
- **Extenuating Circumstances:** Consideration will be given to extenuating circumstances that may affect the child's welfare or the welfare of their family, such as special needs or family emergencies.
- **Minimum Attendance:** We have a minimum attendance of 2 days per week. This supports continuity, helps children settle, and ensures they benefit fully from our routines and curriculum.

Equality and Inclusion

At First Steps, we operate an Inclusion and Equality Policy. This ensures that all children have equal access to nursery places and services, regardless of their gender, race, disability, religion or belief, or the sexual orientation of their parents. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for every child.

Registration Process

Before a child can begin attending the nursery, parents or guardians must complete and sign a Contract and Registration Form. These forms will provide essential details, including:

- Child's personal information (name, date of birth, address)
- Emergency contact details
- Parental responsibilities and consent
- Dietary requirements and allergies
- Collection arrangements
- Doctor's and health visitor's contact details
- Vaccination records

Government Funded Places

We are registered to accept government funding and provide free places for children aged 9 months to 5 years, in line with the Code of Practice. The availability of these places depends on the funding allocation provided by the local authority.

Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodations

We actively seek to provide a fair and supportive environment for all children. We will make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities or additional needs, ensuring we provide the necessary support to help each child thrive.

Adverse Weather

At First Steps, we recognise that adverse weather conditions, such as floods, snow, and heat waves, may affect the nursery's ability to operate safely. We have developed this policy to ensure that we are prepared and can make timely decisions to protect the welfare of the children and staff.

In the event that adverse weather conditions affect the operation of the nursery, we will inform parents and guardians through phone calls and emails as soon as possible.

Floods

In the event of a flood, we will implement our Critical Incident Procedure to ensure the safety of all children and staff. This procedure will focus on:

- Ensuring safe evacuation if necessary.
- Arranging alternative care options if the nursery cannot remain open.
- Informing parents promptly about any disruptions to care.

The nursery will remain in close contact with local authorities for updates on flood risks and will take immediate action based on the severity of the situation. If the nursery must close, parents will be contacted for prompt collection of their children.

Snow

As winter weather can be unpredictable, we have adapted our policy to ensure safety during periods of heavy snowfall. If snowfall is expected during the nursery day, the Duty Manager will assess the situation and make the decision on whether the nursery should remain open.

- **Closure Decisions:** The decision to close the nursery will be based on the safety of the children, staff, and parents. Factors such as road conditions, staff availability, and public safety will be considered.
- **Planned Closure During Nursery Day:** If the nursery needs to close during operating hours, we will contact all parents to arrange for the safe collection of their children as soon as possible.
- **Staff Shortages:** If staff are unable to reach the nursery due to snow, we will contact off-duty staff or agency workers to fill in. In case we are unable to meet the statutory staff-child ratio after all available options have been explored, we will inform Ofsted immediately and document the situation in our incident file.
- **Closure Due to Safety Concerns:** If the nursery believes that the safety, health, or welfare of the children is compromised due to snow (e.g., extreme weather, unsafe conditions), we will close the nursery for the day.

Heat Wave

In the case of high temperatures or heat waves, we will refer to our Suncare Policy to ensure that children are kept cool, hydrated, and protected from heat-related illnesses. This includes:

- Ensuring that children have access to shade, water, and cool rest areas.

- Adjusting outdoor activities to ensure children's health and safety during very hot days.

If the temperature is deemed unsafe for outdoor play or activities, we will modify the nursery's schedule to prioritise the children's safety and well-being.

Communication During Adverse Weather

- **Parent Notification:** In all cases of adverse weather, parents will be contacted through phone calls and emails to ensure they are informed of any disruptions to nursery operations.
- **Closing Decisions:** Any changes to opening hours or closure due to adverse weather will be communicated as early as possible to give parents ample time to make alternative arrangements.

The safety of the children and staff at First Steps is always our top priority. We will always act in the best interest of the children and will make informed decisions based on the current weather conditions. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the nursery, staff, and families.

Allergies and Allergic Reactions

At First Steps, we are committed to ensuring that children with allergies are safe and well-cared for. This policy outlines the procedures for preventing allergic reactions, providing support during an allergic reaction, and ensuring all staff are trained and equipped to handle these situations.

Identifying Allergies

Parental Disclosure: Parents must inform the nursery about any allergies their child has when completing the registration form. This includes food allergies, environmental allergies, and any other sensitivities.

Risk Assessment: The nursery manager will conduct a thorough Allergy Risk Assessment with the parent before the child starts at the nursery. This ensures that all potential allergens are identified and managed appropriately. The information will be shared with all staff to ensure everyone is aware of the child's needs.

Preventing Allergic Reactions

Allergy Awareness: Information about each child's allergies will be shared with all staff members in the nursery. This ensures that staff are well-informed and can take appropriate steps to prevent exposure to allergens.

Food Allergy Management:

- The nursery will ensure that children with food allergies receive meals prepared in a safe environment, free from contamination. For example, food items like nuts will be kept separate from food prepared for allergic children.
- Food prepared for children who have allergies will be served on a red plate to clearly indicate the allergy free meal.
- The nursery manager, cook, and parents will work together to design a suitable menu or make necessary substitutions to ensure a child's safety during mealtimes.

Handling Allergic Reactions

Immediate Response:

- If a child has an allergic reaction (e.g., to food, bee stings, plants), a first aid trained staff member will immediately administer the appropriate treatment based on the child's individual care plan.
- Piriton (or any other suitable medication) is kept in the office, and parents will be contacted before administering it, unless it is a part of the child's emergency care plan that requires immediate action.

Specialist Treatment:

If a child requires epinephrine (EpiPen) or other specialist treatment, all staff working directly with the child, including the manager, will receive specific medical training on how to administer the treatment.

Emergency Protocols:

- If the allergic reaction is severe and the child's condition worsens, staff will call an ambulance immediately. Under no circumstances will staff attempt to transport the child in their own vehicles.
- While waiting for the ambulance, the nursery will contact the emergency contact and arrange to meet them at the hospital. A senior member of staff will accompany the child, bringing the necessary registration forms, medication, and the child's comforter to ensure continuity of care.

Post-Incident Procedures

Calm and Supportive Environment: It is essential to remain calm during an allergic reaction. Children who witness the incident may be frightened and may require comfort and reassurance.

Recording the Incident: Every allergic reaction or incident will be thoroughly documented in the incident book. Parents will be informed, and the incident report will be shared and signed by them at the earliest opportunity.

Parental Communication and Consent

Parent Contact: A family member will be contacted as soon as possible during an allergic reaction. The child's well-being is the top priority, and every effort will be made to ensure that the family is informed and involved.

Written Permission: Written consent for medication such as Piriton will be obtained from parents before a child starts at the nursery, ensuring that there is clear permission for administering medication when needed.

First Steps is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, including those with allergies. By following this policy, we ensure that we have the correct procedures in place to prevent allergic reactions, manage incidents effectively, and keep parents informed at all stages.

Animal Health and Safety Policy

Pets in the Nursery

- **Prior Notification and Permission:** If a child brings a pet from home to visit the nursery as part of a planned activity, parents of all children who may be in contact with the pet must be informed in advance. Verbal permission must be obtained from parents to ensure no child has an allergy or phobia.
- **Health and Safety Requirements:** A full documented risk assessment must be completed before the visit, identifying and mitigating any potential risks. The pet should have all relevant vaccinations, be registered with a veterinarian, and be confirmed as child friendly.
- **Hygiene Measures:**
 - Pets must not come into contact with food, dishes, worktops, or food preparation areas.
 - Children must wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals. Staff must explain the importance of this practice to children, encouraging healthy habits.
 - Comforters and dummies should be kept away from animals to prevent cross-contamination.

Farm Visits

Pre-Visit Checklist

- **Site Assessment:** A senior staff member must conduct a preliminary site visit to ensure the farm is well-managed, clean, and has suitable First Aid arrangements.
- **Animal-Free Picnic Areas:** Verify that animals are restricted from picnic areas.
- **Hygiene Facilities:** Ensure the farm has appropriate handwashing facilities with running water, soap, and disposable towels or hand dryers.
- **Supervision:** Maintain a suitable adult-to-child ratio based on the age, developmental stage, and needs of the children.
- **Education on Safety:** Explain to children that they must avoid eating, drinking, or placing their hands in their mouths while touring the farm, and clarify the reasons for this.
- **Restricted Areas:** Identify any high-risk areas (e.g., slurry pits, animal isolation zones) and ensure appropriate precautions are in place.

During the Farm Visit

- **Animal Interaction Precautions:**
 - Warn children not to place their faces near animals or put their hands in their mouths after contact.
 - Comforters, toys, and dummies should be stored away to prevent contamination.

- Hand Hygiene:
 - Ensure all children, staff, and volunteers wash their hands thoroughly after contact with animals and before eating. Supervise handwashing for younger children.
- Safe Eating Practices:
 - Meals and snacks must be consumed away from animal areas. Ensure children do not eat anything that has fallen on the ground.
 - Prohibit the consumption of unpasteurised products (e.g., milk, cheese) or animal feed (e.g., silage).
- Manure and Slurry Awareness:
 - Warn children against touching manure or slurry. If contact occurs, immediate handwashing is required.
- Departure Hygiene Measures:
 - Ensure all children, staff, and volunteers wash their hands before leaving the farm.
 - Check that clothing and footwear are as clean as possible, free from faecal matter.

Babies and Tweenies

At First Steps, we prioritise the safety, health, and well-being of all children including those under the age of two. Our practices are designed to provide a secure and nurturing environment for this age group. The following measures ensure that all babies and toddlers in our care are protected and cared for appropriately:

1. Separate Base Rooms

- Children under the age of two will be cared for in a separate base room to ensure that their specific needs are met in a safe and developmentally appropriate environment.

2. Safety and Environment

- **Small Objects:** Care will be taken to ensure that babies and toddlers do not have access to small pieces or objects that could be a choking hazard or cause injury.
- **Daily Equipment Checks:** All equipment, including cots, highchairs, pushchairs, and prams, will be inspected daily to ensure safety. This includes checking the stability of cots and highchairs and ensuring that restraints are intact and functioning correctly.
- **Cots and Highchairs:** Cots will be checked to ensure no items are within reach, such as hanging over or beside the cot. Highchairs will always be used with restraints and children will never be left unattended.

3. Hygiene and Cleanliness

- **Changing Facilities:** Potties will be washed and disinfected after every use. Changing mats will be wiped with an anti-bacterial cleanser before and after each nappy change.
- **Bedding:** Each child will have their own bedding, which will be washed weekly or more frequently as needed.
- **Sterilisation:** Bottles, teats, and dummies will be thoroughly cleaned with hot, soapy water and sterilised after use (no dishwasher cleaning). Sterilisers will be washed out daily.
- **Dummies:** Dummies will be cleaned, sterilised, and stored in separate, labelled containers to prevent cross-contamination. If dropped, dummies will be immediately sterilised.

4. Sleep and Rest

- **Safer Sleep Practices:** Children under two years old will not have pillows, cot bumpers, or soft furnishings in their cots to prevent the risk of suffocation. We follow all safer sleep guidelines and advise parents accordingly.
- **Supervision:** Sleeping children will be supervised at all times to ensure their safety.

5. Feeding and Milk Preparation

- **Milk Preparation Area:** A designated area in the kitchen will be used specifically for the preparation of milk and food for babies.

- **Formula Bottles:** Bottles of formula milk will be prepared fresh as needed, using recently boiled water that has cooled to below 21°C. Bottles not consumed immediately will be stored in the fridge and used within two hours. Bottles will be tested with a sterilised thermometer to ensure they are at a safe temperature for consumption.
- **Formula Preparation Guidelines:** We follow the Department of Health guidelines for preparing formula milk, including the use of water that has recently been boiled and cooled for no more than 30 minutes.
- **Breastfeeding:** A designated area will be provided for mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies. Labelled breast milk will be stored in the fridge.

6. Nappy Changing and Hygiene

- **Supervision of Nappy Changes:** Students will only change nappies under the close supervision of a qualified member of staff to ensure proper hygiene and safety.
- **Nappy Change Procedure:** Changing mats will be cleaned before and after each nappy change with antibacterial cleanser.

7. Additional Safety Measures

- **Bottle Disposal:** Bottles of formula or expressed milk will be disposed of after two hours to ensure they are not consumed beyond safe storage times.
- **Bottle and Teat Cleaning:** After use, all bottles and teats will be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water, and sterilised. Bottles and teats will not be cleaned in the dishwasher.

We are committed to providing the highest standard of care for children under two at First Steps. By following these practices, we ensure the safety, health, and well-being of all the children in our care.

Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying

We believe that children flourish best when they know how they are expected to behave. We are committed to creating an environment where children are treated with respect and where positive, caring, and polite behaviour is consistently encouraged and praised. This policy outlines our approach to behaviour management and anti-bullying, ensuring a safe, supportive, and inclusive setting for all children. The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To promote positive behaviour, respect, and empathy among children and staff.
- To prevent bullying and respond effectively when it occurs.
- To establish clear expectations for behaviour and provide a consistent approach to behaviour management.

This policy applies to all staff, children, parents, carers, and visitors within the nursery.

Guiding Principles

- Recognise the individuality of all children and respect their unique personalities.
- Encourage self-discipline, mutual respect, and consideration for others.
- Promote positive interactions through praise and encouragement.
- Work in partnership with parents, maintaining open communication.
- Ensure all staff are responsible for implementing this policy consistently.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Nursery Management: Ensure the policy is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Staff: Promote positive behaviour, identify and respond to negative behaviour, and maintain clear communication with parents.
- Parents/Carers: Support positive behaviour management strategies and collaborate with staff.

Behaviour Management Strategies

- Set clear, consistent boundaries for acceptable behaviour.
- Model respectful and positive behaviour for children.
- Use praise and positive reinforcement to encourage good behaviour.
- Redirect inappropriate behaviour with alternative activities or gentle guidance.
- Address conflicts using age-appropriate language and help children understand the impact of their actions.

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

- Physical punishment is strictly prohibited.
- Staff will not use threatening language or humiliation.
- Inappropriate behaviour will be addressed calmly and constructively, ensuring the child understands that it is the behaviour, not the child, that is unacceptable.
- Repeated incidents of negative behaviour will be documented, and parents will be informed as necessary.

- A behaviour support plan may be developed for children requiring additional guidance.

Anti-Bullying

- Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional behaviour that causes harm, whether physical, verbal, emotional, or online.
- All staff are responsible for preventing bullying and promoting a culture of kindness and respect.
- Any reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- Support will be provided to both the victim and the child engaging in bullying behaviour.

Physical Intervention Policy

- Physical restraint is only used as a last resort to prevent harm to the child or others.
- Staff will use the minimum necessary force and will aim to calm the situation as quickly as possible.
- All incidents of restraint will be recorded, and parents will be informed.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as needed, to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date. The nursery's named person (Tina Woodward) is responsible for overseeing behaviour management and anti-bullying procedures, ensuring staff training, and accessing external expertise if necessary.

Bereavement

At First Steps, we understand that children and their families may experience grief and loss of close family members, friends, or even beloved pets while with us. We recognise that this can be a difficult time for families and a confusing period for young children, especially if they have little or no understanding of death. Our aim is to support both the child and their family, providing comfort, understanding, and guidance through their grief.

This policy is designed to:

- Provide a clear procedure for supporting children and their families experiencing bereavement.
- Ensure that staff understand their role in offering appropriate emotional support.
- Maintain sensitivity and respect for each family's individual needs and wishes.

This policy applies to all staff, children, parents, carers, and visitors within the nursery.

Procedures

1. Notification of Bereavement

- We ask parents to inform the nursery as soon as they feel able if there is a loss of a family member, close friend, or family pet.
- This helps us provide support to the child and family and understand any potential changes in the child's behaviour.

2. Initial Support

- The key person and/or nursery manager will communicate with the family to determine the support they need or want from the nursery.
- This discussion can be informal or a more private meeting away from the child to maintain a calm atmosphere.

3. Support for the Child

- The nursery will provide additional support to the grieving child, which may include one-to-one care.
- Staffing arrangements may be adjusted to ensure the child is comforted by their key worker whenever possible.
- Staff will use age-appropriate language to help the child understand and process their feelings.

4. Flexibility in Attendance

- The nursery will accommodate any necessary adjustments to the child's attendance, offering flexibility as required by the family during this time.

5. Support for the Family

- Staff will maintain open communication with the family and offer additional support where needed.
- Information about local bereavement support services can be provided upon request.

6. Death of Family Pets

- The death of a family pet can also be a significant loss for a child.
- We will use the same supportive approach to help the child process their emotions and understand their loss.

Staff Training

- All staff will be made aware of this policy and trained in providing age-appropriate emotional support to grieving children.
- Regular refreshers will be conducted to ensure staff remain confident in handling bereavement situations.

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date. The nursery manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring staff are supported in their roles.

Biting Policy

This policy outlines our approach to handling biting incidents among children, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all.

Biting is a common behaviour among young children and may occur for various reasons, including frustration, teething, or learned behaviour. Our priority is to address biting incidents promptly and effectively, ensuring the well-being of all children involved.

Immediate Response to Biting:

1. The child who has bitten will be immediately removed from the situation.
2. Staff will use simple, clear language to address the behaviour (e.g., "No biting" or "Biting hurts").
3. Staff will avoid lengthy explanations and use age-appropriate language to explain that biting is wrong.
4. The child who has been bitten will receive immediate care and reassurance.
5. If appropriate, the child who has bitten may be shown the mark they have caused, helping them understand the impact of their actions.

Recording and Reporting:

1. The biting incident will be recorded in the Biting Incident Book.
2. An Accident/Incident Report will be completed for the child who has been bitten.
3. Parents of both children will be informed of the incident.
4. Repeated biting incidents will be monitored, and parents will be consulted.

Parental Communication and Support:

1. Parents will be reassured that biting is a normal behaviour for young children.
2. Discuss any background information that may help, such as biting at home or exposure to biting by other children.
3. Parents will be provided with a biting leaflet if the child is new to the setting and has started biting.

Shadowing Procedure:

1. If biting becomes frequent, shadowing will be implemented.
2. A staff member will closely monitor the child, observing their play and interactions to prevent further incidents.
3. Shadowing will continue until the child demonstrates consistent, positive behaviour.

Training for Staff:

1. All staff members working in rooms where biting incidents occur will receive biting management training.
2. Training will include understanding triggers, effective responses, and proactive measures.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary, ensuring it remains effective and reflective of best practices.

CCTV Policy

This policy outlines the management, operation, and use of the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) system at First Steps. The primary purposes of the CCTV system are:

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, staff, parents, and visitors.
- To protect the nursery premises and property against crime, theft, and vandalism.
- To assist in the effective management and supervision of the nursery.
- To support safeguarding practices in line with statutory guidance.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, parents/carers, children, visitors, contractors, and any other individuals who may appear on CCTV footage within the nursery premises.

System Description

- CCTV cameras are positioned to monitor key areas of the nursery, Parents or Visitors will be informed of the position of the cameras upon request.
- Cameras are not installed in areas where privacy is expected, such as toilets or changing areas.
- The system is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Legal Framework

This policy complies with the following legislation:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Data Controller

The Data Controller for the CCTV system is:

Luke Jones

Contact Email/Phone: luke@firststepspoynton.co.uk

Use of CCTV Footage

Footage will only be used for the purposes outlined in section 1. This includes:

- Reviewing incidents or accidents.
- Investigating allegations or complaints.
- Assisting the police or other lawful authorities.

Footage will not be used for staff performance monitoring or for general surveillance beyond its intended purpose.

Access to CCTV Footage

Access to live and recorded footage is restricted to authorised personnel only:

- Management and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Law enforcement officers (upon valid request)

Parents may request to view footage involving their child only, subject to data protection and safeguarding considerations.

Data Storage and Retention

- CCTV footage is stored securely with appropriate encryption or password protection.
- Footage is retained for a maximum of 30 days unless required for an ongoing investigation or legal matter.
- After the retention period, footage is deleted securely.

Signage and Notification

Clear signs indicating CCTV usage are displayed at nursery entrances and key monitored areas, in compliance with ICO guidelines.

Rights of Individuals

Under the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR, individuals have the right to:

- Be informed that CCTV is in use.
- Request access to footage of themselves (subject to exemptions).
- Request correction or deletion of personal data where appropriate.

Requests should be made in writing to the Data Controller.

Security and Maintenance

- Equipment is maintained regularly to ensure proper functioning.
- Recorded data is stored in a secure location with limited access.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or circumstances change. Staff and parents will be notified of any changes.

Children's Well-being Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to promoting and supporting the well-being of all children at First Steps, ensuring a nurturing environment that fosters physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

Understanding Well-being: Well-being is a broad concept that encompasses how individuals feel about themselves and their lives. At First Steps, we support well-being in four key areas:

1. Physical Well-being:

- Growth, development, and physical fitness are encouraged through active play, both indoors and outdoors.
- Nutritious, balanced meals are provided, promoting healthy eating habits.
- Children are guided on maintaining personal hygiene (e.g., handwashing, tooth brushing).
- Appropriate rest and sleep areas are available for children, allowing them to recharge.

2. Mental and Emotional Well-being:

- Children are supported in recognising, expressing, and coping with their feelings.
- Emotional literacy is promoted through activities that help children identify emotions.
- Self-regulation skills are developed using carefully planned activities and resources.
- Staff are trained to recognise when a child may need emotional support and can provide one-on-one or small group assistance.

3. Social Well-being:

- Strong attachments are fostered between children and their key persons, ensuring secure relationships.
- Children are encouraged to build relationships with peers, promoting a sense of belonging.
- Opportunities for solo, paired, small group, and large group play are provided.

4. Spiritual Well-being:

- We embrace diversity and celebrate various cultural, spiritual, and religious events with children and their families.
- Children are encouraged to explore their values, beliefs, and personal identity in an inclusive environment.

Our Approach:

- Our curriculum is carefully planned to ensure children experience a wide range of activities that promote well-being.

- Staff model positive behaviours and use the Behaviour Management Policy for consistent guidance.
- Children are involved in creating rules and boundaries, promoting self-regulation and respect for others.

Staff Support:

- Staff receive training to recognise and support children's emotional needs.
- Regular well-being checks are conducted to ensure children feel safe and supported.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary to ensure it remains effective and in line with best practices.

Choking Prevention Policy

This policy outlines our procedures for preventing choking incidents at the nursery, ensuring the safety of all children during mealtimes and snack times.

Supervision and Training:

1. Children must always be supervised while eating by a trained first aider.
2. Staff responsible for supervising mealtimes receive regular training on choking prevention and response.

Food Preparation Guidelines:

1. All food is prepared according to the child's age and developmental stage:
 - Foods are chopped into appropriate sizes.
 - Spoon sizes are adjusted to ensure they are not too large.
2. High-risk foods (e.g., grapes, sausages, bananas) are cut lengthwise and then width wise to prevent a choking hazard.
3. Grapes are carefully chopped for younger children, and older children are reminded to bite and chew them properly.
4. Hard foods, such as apples, are either cut into small pieces or grated for younger children.
5. Hard sweets and lollipops are not provided by the nursery and are not permitted on the premises.

Eating Practices and Supervision:

1. Children are encouraged to sit calmly while eating, avoiding running, playing, or lying down.
2. Staff actively remind children to chew their food properly and avoid taking overly large bites.
3. Older children are taught safe eating habits, including how to safely cut their own food.
4. Staff monitor each child closely, especially those who are still developing fine motor skills or have specific dietary needs.

Emergency Response:

1. All staff members receive training in first aid, including choking response techniques.
2. If a child shows signs of choking, staff will immediately use age-appropriate first aid procedures.
3. Emergency services will be contacted if the child cannot clear the blockage, and parents will be informed promptly.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary, ensuring it remains compliant with best practices and current guidelines.

Complains and Compliments

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that all parents and carers feel valued, heard, and supported. We welcome feedback, including both compliments and complaints, as part of our continuous improvement process.

At our nursery, we believe that parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their individual needs and wishes. We aim to provide a high standard of care and education, and we value both positive feedback and constructive criticism.

Compliments:

- If you are happy with the care and service provided, we encourage you to share your positive feedback with the relevant staff member or the nursery manager.
- Compliments may also be shared in writing, and we will ensure they are passed on to the staff members involved.

Complaints Procedure:

We are committed to resolving complaints quickly and effectively through a clear, structured process:

Stage 1:

- If you have a concern or complaint, please speak directly with your child's key person or a senior member of staff.
- Most issues can be resolved quickly at this stage.

Stage 2:

- If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, please submit your complaint in writing to the nursery manager.
- The manager will investigate and provide a written response within three working days.
- All complaints will be recorded in the complaints logbook, detailing the nature of the complaint and actions taken.

Stage 3:

- If you remain dissatisfied, a formal meeting will be arranged between the manager, the parent, and a senior staff member.
- A written record of the meeting, including actions agreed upon, will be created. All parties will review and sign this record.

Stage 4:

- If the issue cannot be resolved, you have the right to raise the matter with Ofsted. Contact details for Ofsted will be provided upon request.

Record Keeping:

- A record of all complaints will be maintained securely and confidentially in the nursery's complaints logbook.

- Parents can access this record upon request, but all personal details will be kept confidential.
- Ofsted has the right to review the complaints log during inspections.

Child Protection Complaints:

- Complaints related to child protection or safeguarding must be addressed according to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Continuous Improvement:

- We welcome suggestions from parents and carers on how we can improve our services.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and up to date.

Confidentiality / Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to maintaining the confidentiality and security of personal information for children, families, and staff at the nursery, in compliance with data protection laws.

The nursery is legally required to collect, store, and process personal information about children, their families, and staff members. This information is used for essential purposes, including registration, invoicing, emergency contacts, and maintaining accurate records.

Storage and Security of Information:

1. All confidential records are securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and / or stored in a locked office.
2. Digital records, if used, are securely stored with password protection and access controls.
3. Only authorised staff have access to confidential information.

Maintaining Confidentiality:

1. Staff, volunteers, and students are informed that all personal information is confidential and for use only within the nursery setting.
2. Parents have access to their own child's records but not to the records of any other child.
3. Information about children, parents, or staff will not be shared without prior parental or staff consent, except where legally required (e.g., safeguarding concerns).
4. Staff must not discuss personal information given by parents with other staff members, except where it directly affects the planning or care of the child.
5. Concerns relating to a child's personal safety are securely stored and shared only on a strict "need-to-know" basis.
6. Staff, students, and volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality on social media platforms, following our Mobile Phone and Social Networking Policy.

Parental Rights:

1. Parents are informed of their right to access their child's personal records upon request.
2. Written parental consent is obtained before using any personal information beyond standard nursery procedures.

Staff Responsibilities:

1. Staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the importance of confidentiality during their induction.
2. Breaches of confidentiality by staff may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal in serious cases.

Employment Confidentiality:

1. Information relating to the employment of staff is treated confidentially and is restricted to those involved in personnel decisions.

Child Protection Exception:

1. In cases where a child is considered at risk, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will take precedence over this confidentiality policy.

Data Protection Compliance:

1. This policy aligns with current data protection legislation, ensuring that personal data is collected, processed, and stored lawfully.
2. Parents and staff are informed of how their data is used, stored, and protected.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary to ensure compliance with best practices and data protection laws

COSHH Policy

(Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the safe storage, handling, and use of substances that may pose a risk to health within the nursery, in compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.

Legal Requirements: The nursery is legally required to:

- Assess the risks associated with hazardous substances.
- Determine necessary precautions to prevent ill health.
- Implement and maintain control measures to minimise exposure.
- Ensure all staff are trained in the safe use of hazardous substances.

Identification of Hazardous Substances:

1. A list of all hazardous or potentially hazardous substances used in the nursery is maintained. This may include:
 - Cleaning products (e.g., disinfectants, bleach).
 - Arts and crafts materials (e.g., glue, paint).
 - Personal hygiene products (e.g., hand soap, sanitisers).
 - Body fluids, which are treated as hazardous and handled using protective measures.

Storage and Handling:

1. All hazardous substances are securely stored out of reach of children.
2. Containers are clearly labelled with the substance name and hazard symbols.
3. Staff are trained to handle hazardous substances safely, following manufacturer instructions.
4. Protective equipment (e.g., gloves, aprons) are provided and must be worn when using hazardous substances.
5. Products must never be mixed, as this can create dangerous by-products.

Risk Assessment:

1. A COSHH risk assessment is completed for each hazardous substance, identifying the potential risks and control measures required.
2. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated when new substances are introduced.

Exposure Control Measures:

1. Staff must avoid inhalation, ingestion, and skin contact with hazardous substances.
2. Appropriate ventilation is maintained when using chemicals.
3. Spills are cleaned immediately using safe procedures, and contaminated materials are disposed of appropriately.
4. In case of exposure, staff must follow the first aid procedures specified in the COSHH risk assessment.

First Aid and Emergency Procedures:

1. Staff must be familiar with first aid procedures for each hazardous substance, as detailed in the COSHH risk assessment.
2. In the event of an accident, first aid must be administered immediately, and the incident recorded.
3. Medical attention will be sought if necessary.

Training and Awareness:

1. All staff, volunteers, and students receive training on COSHH as part of their induction.
2. Refresher training is provided as needed to ensure ongoing compliance.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if necessary to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Dealing with Discriminatory Behaviour

This policy outlines our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment at the nursery, free from discrimination, bullying, or harassment. We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

This policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from discrimination based on the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

Types of Discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by Association:** Discriminating against someone because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by Perception:** Discriminating against someone because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a rule or policy that disadvantages individuals with a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.

Recognising Discriminatory Behaviour: Discriminatory behaviour can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical assault or intimidation.
- Derogatory name-calling, insults, or jokes.
- Displaying offensive symbols or distributing discriminatory materials.
- Excluding or isolating individuals.
- Making negative comments about someone's appearance, beliefs, or abilities.
- Patronising language or actions.

Reporting and Recording:

- All staff must remain vigilant and take immediate action to challenge and report any discriminatory behaviour they observe.
- Incidents are recorded in the nursery's incident log, including details of the incident, those involved, and the actions taken.
- The nursery manager will review all incidents and maintain a record of patterns or recurring issues.
- Parents of children involved will be informed of any incidents related to discriminatory behaviour and the actions taken.

Responding to Incidents:

1. The staff member who witnesses discriminatory behaviour must intervene immediately and address the behaviour.
2. The incident is reported to the nursery manager, who will investigate and determine appropriate actions.
3. If the incident involves a child, age-appropriate discussions will be held to explain why the behaviour was unacceptable.
4. If the incident involves an adult, including staff, volunteers, or parents, the manager will address the behaviour and take appropriate action, which may include disciplinary measures.
5. Continued discriminatory behaviour by any child may result in further actions, including suspension or exclusion, if other strategies have failed.

Support for Victims:

- Victims of discriminatory behaviour will receive reassurance and support from staff.
- Parents of the affected child will be informed, and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the child feels safe and supported.

Preventing Discriminatory Behaviour:

- Staff receive training on recognising and challenging discrimination.
- The nursery promotes an inclusive curriculum that values diversity.
- Positive behaviour is encouraged, and children are taught to respect differences.

Confidentiality:

- Information about incidents of discrimination is treated confidentially and shared only with those who need to know.

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current legislation.

Early Learning Opportunities Statement

At First Steps, we are committed to providing all children with high-quality early learning opportunities that support their holistic development. We recognise that each child is a unique individual who learns at their own pace and in their own way. Our approach is guided by the principles of inclusivity, respect, and partnership with parents and carers.

Our Commitment:

- We ensure that all children have access to a rich and varied curriculum that supports their development in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.
- We promote a positive and stimulating play environment where children can explore, discover, and learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities.
- We respect and celebrate diversity, ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, culture, or abilities, feel valued and included.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers, recognising them as primary educators and encouraging them to take an active role in their child's learning journey.

Individualised Learning:

- We maintain a personalised record of each child's development, which includes their abilities, progress, interests, and areas where they may need additional support.
- Our planning is based on regular observations of each child, ensuring that activities are tailored to meet their individual needs and interests.
- We adapt our approach to suit the different ways children learn, acknowledging that each child is unique.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment:

- Our staff understand the importance of a positive and inclusive play environment where children feel safe, confident, and supported.
- We promote positive social interactions, teaching children to respect and value one another.
- We offer a range of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors, providing opportunities for exploration, creativity, and physical development.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion:

- We ensure that all learning materials, activities, and resources reflect a diverse and multicultural society.
- Our staff receive training in promoting equality and celebrating diversity.
- We actively challenge stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour.

Partnership with Parents:

- We value parents as partners in their child's learning and development.
- Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's interests, achievements, and experiences outside of nursery.

- Regular communication is maintained through daily feedback, parent meetings, and access to each child's learning records.

We regularly review and update our planning to ensure it meets the needs of all children. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if needed, ensuring it aligns with the latest guidance and best practices in early childhood education.

Fire Drill and Evacuation Policy

At First Steps, the safety of all children, staff, and visitors is our highest priority. This Fire Drill and Evacuation Policy is designed to ensure that all individuals on the premises are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire or emergency, minimising risk and ensuring a safe and efficient evacuation.

Responsibility:

- The Manager has overall responsibility for implementing and maintaining this policy, including organising fire drills and ensuring all staff are aware of evacuation procedures.
- Fire drills will be conducted every six months for each group of children or whenever significant changes occur (e.g., a large intake of children, a new staff member).
- The Manager will also ensure that all fire safety equipment (extinguishers, blankets) is maintained, with regular checks by a certified fire safety provider (JPS Fire).
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) will be conducted annually to ensure electrical outlets and equipment are safe.

Fire Safety Checklist:

Item	Checked by	Frequency	Location
Escape routes/fire exits	All staff	Daily	All rooms
Fire extinguishers/blankets	JPS Fire	Annually	All rooms
Smoke/heat alarms	Manager	Three monthly	Kitchen and main corridors
Fire doors	All staff	Daily	All rooms

Registration Procedures:

- An accurate record of all staff, children, and visitors present must be maintained at all times.
- The staff and children's registers, visitor book, and emergency contacts list must be taken out during an evacuation.

Fire Drill Procedure: On discovering a fire:

- Raise the alarm calmly by pressing the smoke detector button on the smoke alarm in the main corridor.
- Immediately begin evacuation under the guidance of the manager or senior staff on duty.
- Use the nearest safe exit and lead children to the assembly point (Grass verge adjacent to car park).
- Ensure all doors are closed behind you where possible.
- Staff in the baby room should use the mobile cot to evacuate non-walking children.
- Do not attempt to collect personal belongings.
- Do not re-enter the building to fight the fire.

If evacuation is not possible:

- Remain in a safe location with the children.
- Keep the children calm and together.
- If possible, inform the manager of your location and the identity of the children and staff with you.

Manager's/Team Leader's Responsibilities:

- Collect the children's register, staff register, mobile phone, keys, visitor book, and fire bag (containing emergency contact list, nappies, wipes, and blankets).
- Call emergency services (999) and request the fire service.
- At the assembly point (Grass verge adjacent to car park), check all children and staff against the registers.
- Account for all staff and visitors.
- Provide the fire service with details of any missing individuals and their possible locations.

Important Reminders:

- Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances until it is declared safe by the fire service.
- Fire drills must be carried out at different times of the day to ensure familiarity with the procedure under various conditions.
- All staff must receive training on this policy during induction and as part of ongoing training.

Health and Safety Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all our employees, children, and visitors. We aim to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent accidents, reduce risks, and promote the well-being of everyone involved in the nursery. This policy covers a range of areas including safety protocols, training, risk assessments, emergency procedures, and responsibilities for maintaining a healthy environment.

1. Health and Safety Commitment

The nursery is committed to providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, children, and visitors. This includes the use of appropriate training, equipment, and supervision, alongside fostering a health and safety culture.

2. Aims and Objectives

The goal is to ensure health, safety, and welfare by:

- Maintaining a safe environment and work procedures.
- Ensuring safety in the handling and storage of materials.
- Providing adequate training and supervision.
- Developing emergency procedures and conducting regular drills.
- Compliance with health and safety laws and regulations.
- Accommodating specific needs, including for pregnant workers, individuals with disabilities, and students.

3. Practical Safety Measures

Key safety practices include:

- Keeping exits clear, maintaining equipment, and ensuring regular safety checks.
- Conducting fire drills and ensuring all individuals know evacuation procedures.
- Preventing the spread of infectious diseases and promoting cleanliness.
- Ensuring all chemicals and cleaning materials are stored safely.
- Always maintaining strict supervision of children and staff.
- Regular risk assessments for all areas, including activities and outings.

4. Responsibilities

- **Overall Responsibility:** Ian Jones, the manager, is responsible for ensuring this policy is carried out.
- **Staff Responsibilities:** All staff are responsible for upholding the health and safety practices and reporting any issues.
- **Parental and Visitor Responsibilities:** Parents and visitors are encouraged to report concerns to staff.

5. Training and Development

- **First Aid:** At least one member of staff must hold a Paediatric First Aid certificate at all times.
- **Health and Safety Training:** Staff are trained regularly on topics like risk assessments, manual handling, fire safety, and the safe use of chemicals.

6. Health and Safety Arrangements

- **Risk Assessments:** All areas of the nursery, activities, and outings are regularly assessed for potential hazards.
- **Fire Safety:** The nursery has a comprehensive fire safety policy, including the prevention and evacuation procedures.
- **Accident Management:** The policy includes a clear procedure for responding to accidents, with designated first aiders.

The policy will be reviewed annually or whenever changes occur. Regular updates will be shared with staff, parents, and visitors.

Hygiene and Nappy Changing Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of hygiene to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines our procedures for maintaining cleanliness and safe nappy changing practices within the nursery.

Hand Washing Hygiene

- All staff and children are encouraged to maintain a routine of regular hand washing, especially:
 - Before and after meals.
 - Before and after nappy changes.
 - After sneezing, coughing, or wiping noses.
- Wash basins with soap are provided in all relevant areas to encourage proper hand hygiene.
- Children are guided and encouraged to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing, followed by hand washing.
- Younger children may have their hands cleaned with wipes, when necessary, especially if they are unable to use soap and water independently.

Cleaning Areas

- All surfaces, including tables, chairs, and frequently touched areas, are cleaned regularly with anti-bacterial spray and disposable paper towels.
- Disposable gloves and aprons are provided for all staff and must be worn when cleaning up bodily fluids or during nappy changing.
- Any areas contaminated by bodily fluids, including toys, must be promptly cleaned using anti-bacterial spray or disinfectant wipes.
- Contaminated clothing will be removed, double-bagged, and returned to parents at the end of the day.

Protective Clothing

- Staff must wear disposable gloves and white aprons during nappy changes or when assisting with toileting.
- For mealtimes, blue aprons are to be worn, and gloves must be used when handling or serving food.
- Staff experiencing mild illnesses (e.g., a cold) must not handle food to prevent contamination.

Nappy Changing Procedures

- Nappy changing areas are cleaned and sanitised between each use.
- Staff must wear gloves and aprons while changing nappies and ensure that they are disposed of after each use.
- Children are encouraged to participate in the nappy changing process (where appropriate) to promote independence.
- Used nappies are disposed of in designated nappy bins with secure lids, which are emptied regularly.

- Staff must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after each nappy change and use hand sanitiser as needed.

Hygiene Monitoring and Training

- The manager is responsible for ensuring that hygiene standards are maintained throughout the nursery.
- Staff will receive regular training on hygiene practices, including hand washing techniques, safe food handling, and proper use of protective clothing.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to maintain high standards of hygiene within the nursery.

Immunisation

At First Steps, we are committed to promoting the health and well-being of all children and staff. This policy outlines our approach to ensuring that immunisation information is managed effectively, protecting everyone within the nursery environment.

Child Immunisations

- We strongly recommend that, where possible, children are vaccinated in accordance with the UK childhood immunisation schedule.
- Parents are responsible for informing the nursery if their child is not vaccinated or if they choose not to vaccinate their child. This information is essential to ensure that all children, staff, and parents are protected from unnecessary health risks.
- The nursery manager must maintain an up-to-date record of all children who are not vaccinated, ensuring this information is handled confidentially.
- Parents should be aware that there may be children in the nursery who are not vaccinated due to age, medical reasons, or parental choice. However, we do not discriminate against children who are not vaccinated.
- The nursery will not disclose the immunisation status of individual children to other parents.
- Immunisation information should be recorded on the child's registration documents and updated as necessary, including whenever a child receives new vaccinations.

Staff Immunisations

- All staff members are responsible for maintaining their own immunisation status, ensuring that they are up-to-date with the following vaccinations:
 - Tetanus
 - Tuberculosis
 - Rubella
 - Hepatitis
 - Polio
- If a staff member is unsure about their vaccination status, they are encouraged to consult their GP or practice nurse for advice.
- Staff are encouraged to keep their own vaccination records up-to-date to protect themselves and others within the nursery environment.

Emergency Information

- Up-to-date emergency information should be maintained for each child and should be reviewed with every room change.
- Parents will receive regular reminders to update emergency information through room inductions and notices on the Parent Information Board.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure it reflects best practices and the latest health guidelines.

Inclusion and Equality

At First Steps, we are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that values diversity and promotes equality for all children, families, and staff. Our nursery is dedicated to creating an environment where every individual is treated with respect and has equal opportunities, regardless of gender, age, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, ethnic or national origin, or political belief.

We are committed to:

- Providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families according to their individual needs.
- Ensuring that all staff understand their responsibility to uphold this policy and promote an inclusive environment.
- Addressing any concerns or breaches of this policy immediately and effectively.

Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Childcare Act 2006
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3 – Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Our Commitment

We will ensure that:

- Recruitment, selection, training, and promotion of staff are based on individual merit and skills, free from discrimination.
- Children of all backgrounds, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties, are welcomed and supported according to their individual needs.
- The nursery environment is accessible, safe, and welcoming for all children, staff, and families.
- Positive role models, resources, and activities that promote understanding and respect for diversity are provided.
- Staff, parents, and children are supported in challenging any discriminatory language, actions, or attitudes.

Admissions and Service Provision

- Our nursery is open and accessible to all children and families in the community, with no discrimination based on any protected characteristic.
- We will take all reasonable steps to accommodate children with additional needs, including making adjustments to the environment and providing additional support where necessary.

Recruitment

- All job applicants will be treated fairly and without discrimination. Job advertisements, applications, and interview processes will avoid any form of bias.
- All candidates will be assessed against consistent criteria, and feedback will be offered to unsuccessful candidates upon request.
- Staff involved in recruitment will receive training in inclusive and non-discriminatory practices.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff must uphold the principles of this policy and challenge any language, behaviours, or attitudes that are discriminatory.
- Staff are required to participate in equality, inclusion, and diversity training as part of their ongoing professional development.

Early Learning Framework

- We will provide a curriculum that promotes understanding and respect for all individuals, helping children develop positive attitudes toward diversity.
- Our resources will reflect a wide range of communities, avoiding stereotypes and promoting inclusion.
- We will celebrate a variety of cultural festivals, encouraging children to explore and respect different beliefs.

Food and Cultural Needs

- We will work with parents to ensure that all children's medical, cultural, and dietary needs are met.
- Children will have the opportunity to learn about different foods and cultural traditions in a positive and respectful way.

Meetings and Communication

- We will ensure that all parents and carers are able to participate in the life of the nursery, including attending meetings and events.
- Information will be communicated in a variety of ways (written, verbal, and translated) to ensure accessibility for all families.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains effective and aligned with best practices. Any feedback from staff, parents, or children will be used to improve our approach to inclusion and equality. Breaches of this policy will be addressed promptly and appropriately, with support offered to those affected.

Infection Control Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines our approach to preventing and controlling the spread of infections within the nursery.

Principles of Infection Control

- We recognise that infections can spread through respiratory droplets, direct contact, and contact with contaminated surfaces.
- Our goal is to minimise the risk of infection through effective hygiene practices, cleaning routines, and by promoting good habits among children and staff.

Hygiene Practices

- Children and staff are encouraged to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing ("Catch it, Bin it, Kill it").
- Used tissues are disposed of hygienically, and all children and staff must wash their hands immediately after use.
- Staff wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves and aprons when changing nappies, toileting children, or handling bodily fluids.
- Potties and changing mats are cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
- Toilets are cleaned and disinfected several times daily.
- Hand washing is promoted among children through activities, stories, and positive role modelling by staff.

Cleaning Procedures

- All toys, equipment, and resources are cleaned regularly using antibacterial cleanser or appropriate sterilisation methods.
- Toys and equipment used by babies and toddlers are cleaned immediately if placed in their mouths.
- Dummies are stored in individual, labelled hygienic containers, and are cleaned immediately if dropped.
- Children's bedding is individually assigned, labelled, and washed at least once a week.
- Periodic deep cleaning of all rooms, including carpets and soft furnishings, will be carried out to reduce the risk of infection.

Managing Illness

- We follow our Sickness and Illness Policy to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- Parents will be notified of our infection control procedures and encouraged to maintain good hygiene practices at home.
- Staff who are unwell or deemed contagious must stay at home until they are fully recovered.
- The nursery manager has the right to refuse entry to any child, parent, staff member, or visitor who is suspected to be contagious.

Monitoring and Supplies

- Each room has a cleaning routine that staff must follow and complete throughout the day.
- The nursery will ensure a sufficient supply of tissues, hand soap, hand sanitiser, cleaning agents, and PPE (e.g., gloves and aprons) is always maintained.
- During periods of increased illness (e.g., winter flu season), the nursery will increase the frequency of cleaning and stock levels of hygiene supplies.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff are responsible for maintaining high standards of hygiene and infection control.
- Staff must ensure that they follow this policy and encourage children to maintain good hygiene habits.
- Any concerns about infection control must be reported to the nursery manager immediately.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure it reflects best practices in infection control.

Intimate Care Procedure

At First Steps, we are committed to supporting the personal care and welfare of all children in line with their individual needs. Our intimate care procedures ensure that children feel safe, secure, and respected during personal care routines, which may include:

- Nappy changing
- Supporting children with toileting
- Changing clothes when necessary
- Administering first aid and providing specialist medical support.

Principles of Intimate Care

- Children's privacy, dignity, and comfort are our priority during all intimate care routines.
- Wherever possible, a child's key person or a familiar member of staff will provide intimate care to ensure consistency and trust.
- Intimate care will always be carried out with sensitivity and respect, taking into account each child's preferences and individual needs.

Staff Training and Safeguarding

- All staff involved in intimate care must have a current enhanced DBS check.
- Staff receive training on appropriate methods for intimate care, including nappy changing, toileting support, and administering first aid.
- Regular supervision, appraisals, and observations are conducted to ensure best practices are maintained.
- Staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection, including identifying signs of abuse and how to report concerns promptly and appropriately.

Procedures for Intimate Care

- Parents are encouraged to share relevant information about their child's needs, preferences, and any specific requirements for intimate care.
- Staff follow clear hygiene procedures, including wearing gloves and aprons for nappy changing and toileting support.
- Nappy changing areas are kept clean, and potties are disinfected after each use.
- For children requiring specialist support (e.g., medical procedures), staff will receive appropriate training, and a care plan will be developed in partnership with parents.
- Where a child requires specific support, a meeting will be arranged with parents to discuss the child's needs and agree on a care plan.

Safeguarding Measures

- The nursery maintains a whistleblowing policy, enabling staff to raise concerns about any unsafe or inappropriate practices.
- Management conducts regular observations of intimate care routines to ensure that procedures are followed correctly.
- Risk assessments are carried out for all aspects of intimate care, and appropriate safeguards are implemented.

- Staff use positive behaviour management techniques and are trained to use restraint only if necessary to protect a child from harm (refer to the Behaviour Management Policy).

Parental Partnership

- Parents will be informed of our intimate care procedures during the registration process.
- Any changes to a child's intimate care needs will be discussed with parents, and their input will be valued in developing a suitable care plan.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns they may have about intimate care procedures with the nursery manager.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices. Staff, parents, and children's feedback will be considered when updating this policy. Any concerns or incidents related to intimate care will be recorded, reported, and addressed promptly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Late Collection and Non-Collection Policy

At First Steps, we prioritise the safety and well-being of all children. This policy outlines the procedures for handling situations where a child is collected late or not collected at all.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are expected to:

- Agree on an approximate arrival and collection time with the nursery.
- Notify the nursery immediately if they anticipate being late.
- Arrange for a designated person to collect their child when they cannot do so themselves.
- Inform the nursery of the designated person's identity. This helps minimise any distress for the child.
- Provide a detailed description of the designated person, including their date of birth if known, if they are unfamiliar to the nursery staff.
- Ensure that the designated person knows the child's safety password, as the nursery will only release the child to someone who can provide this password.

Procedure for Late Collection

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time, the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will attempt to contact the parents using the provided contact details.
2. If parents cannot be reached, the manager will be notified.
3. The manager will check for any recorded information regarding changes to usual routines, work patterns, or emergency contacts.
4. If no information is available and parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the child's record will be called.
5. If the child remains uncollected outside normal operating hours, two members of staff (including one senior staff member) will stay with the child, ensuring the child's safety and comfort.
6. Staff will continue attempting to contact parents or emergency contacts every 10 minutes, logging all attempts in a detailed incident record.
7. If one hour passes without contact, the nursery will notify Cheshire East Duty Team (ChECS) and Ofsted of the situation.

Additional Care and Fees

- The child's well-being will be maintained at all times while waiting for collection.
- A late fee of £10 for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) will be charged to parents. This fee covers the additional operational costs incurred by extending care beyond normal hours.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to ensure it remains effective and aligned with regulatory guidelines.

Lockdown Policy

First Steps is committed to ensuring the safety of all children, staff, and visitors, even in extreme circumstances. This Lockdown Policy provides clear guidelines on how to respond if a situation arises that requires securing the premises (lockdown). This may be due to external threats (e.g., nearby police incidents) or internal threats (e.g., unauthorised persons attempting to enter).

When Lockdown May Be Initiated

A lockdown may be initiated if:

- Emergency services notify us of a nearby incident requiring lockdown.
- Management determines a situation on or near the premises poses a serious threat (e.g., armed individuals, unauthorised access attempts).

Staff Responsibilities During Lockdown

All staff must:

- Stay Calm.
- Remain in their designated areas (rooms they are working in) unless instructed otherwise.
- Secure all windows and doors. Keys should be kept on hooks next to doors.
- Close blinds and lock fire doors where possible, ensuring personal safety.
- Keep children and themselves away from windows and doors.
- Stay low, using tables for cover if necessary. Older children should be periodically rehearsed in this procedure, similar to fire drills.
- Await further instructions.
- If appropriate, tune into local news for updates.
- Keep children calmly occupied with books or quiet activities.

Management Responsibilities

- Contact emergency services (police) immediately, unless the lockdown is initiated by them.
- Avoid repeated calls to emergency services unless critical new information emerges.
- Follow all instructions provided by emergency services.

Prohibited Actions During Lockdown

- No non-essential calls on landlines or mobiles.
- Do not open doors once lockdown has begun, until officially advised it is safe.
- Avoid using corridors or gathering in large, open spaces.
- If the fire alarm is activated, remain in place unless there is an immediate danger from fire in your area.

Communication with Parents

- We will use existing communication systems (social media, text, email) to inform parents.
- Parents will be discouraged from calling the nursery directly during a lockdown to keep phone lines clear.

- A sample message for parents may read:
“Due to an incident, we have been advised by emergency services to secure the premises and stay in place until given the ‘all clear.’ Please do not attempt to collect your child until it is safe. We will provide updates as soon as possible.”

After the Lockdown

- Parents will be informed once it is safe to collect their children.
- Staff may be required to provide statements to emergency services if they witnessed the incident.

Understanding Threat Levels

The emergency services may provide information using the following threat levels:

- LOW: An attack is unlikely.
- MODERATE: An attack is possible but not likely.
- SUBSTANTIAL: An attack is a strong possibility.
- SEVERE: An attack is highly likely.
- CRITICAL: An attack is expected imminently.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Lost Child Procedure from Nursery

At First Steps, the safety and security of all children are our highest priorities. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing from the nursery, the following procedure will be implemented immediately:

Immediate Actions

1. Initial Search:
 - The nursery manager will be informed immediately.
 - All available staff will be deployed to conduct a thorough search of the nursery and its immediate surroundings.
 - Staff will ensure that all other children remain supervised, calm, and supported.
2. Secondary Search:
 - The nursery manager will conduct a second, more detailed search of the premises and surrounding area.
3. Contacting Authorities and Parents:
 - If the child is not found after the initial searches, the manager will immediately contact the police to report the missing child.
 - The manager will also inform the parents or guardians of the missing child.
4. Ongoing Search and Childcare:
 - Staff will continue to search for the missing child while maintaining a calm and supportive environment for the other children.
 - Regular headcounts and checks will be conducted on all remaining children.
5. Meeting Authorities and Parents:
 - The manager will meet with the police and the child's parents upon their arrival.
 - The manager will follow all instructions given by the police.

Post-Incident Actions

- A detailed written report of the incident will be completed as soon as reasonably possible.
- Ofsted will be notified of the incident without delay.
- Management will provide support and reassurance to parents, children, and staff who may be affected by the incident.
- A thorough post-incident risk assessment will be conducted to identify and address any weaknesses in current procedures.

This procedure will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure it remains effective and in line with best practices.

Lost Child Procedure from Outing

Ensuring the safety of all children during outings is a top priority. Regular headcounts are conducted throughout any outing to maintain child safety. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing while on an outing, the following procedure will be implemented.

Immediately:

Immediate Actions

1. Initial Search:
 - The organiser of the outing will be informed immediately.
 - All staff present will be directed to conduct a thorough search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised, calm, and supported.
2. Notification of On-Site Security:
 - If appropriate, any available on-site security will be informed and provided with a description of the missing child.
3. Contacting Authorities:
 - If the child is not located promptly, the designated person in charge will immediately contact the police.
4. Informing the Nursery and Parents:
 - The designated person will contact the nursery, which will then notify the child's parents, providing details of the situation.
 - If the entire nursery is on the outing, the person in charge will carry all contact details for parents/guardians.
5. Supporting the Group:
 - Staff from the nursery may be sent to help return the remaining children safely, if appropriate.
 - At least one member of staff will remain at the search location to continue searching.
6. Coordination with Police and Parents:
 - The staff member at the scene will meet the police and the child's parents upon their arrival, following all instructions from the authorities.

Ongoing Care

- Staff will continue to search for the missing child while ensuring the safety and welfare of the remaining children.

Post-Incident Actions

- A detailed written report of the incident will be completed as soon as practicably possible.
- Ofsted will be notified of the incident without delay.
- Management will provide support and reassurance to parents, children, and staff who may be affected by the incident.
- A thorough post-incident risk assessment will be conducted to identify and address any weaknesses in current procedures.

This procedure will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure it remains effective and in line with best practices.

Manual Handling

First Steps is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all staff and children. As manual handling cannot be completely avoided, this policy outlines safe practices to minimise the risk of injury during manual handling activities, particularly when lifting children.

Training and Awareness

- All staff must complete the Noodle Now manual handling course within their first year of employment.
- Ongoing training will be provided as necessary.
- Manual handling training will specifically cover the differences between handling static loads and carrying children.

Preventing Injuries

Where possible, hazardous manual handling should be avoided. However, when it cannot be avoided, the following steps should be taken:

- Conduct a risk assessment for all manual handling tasks.
- Consider the following factors in the assessment:
 - The Task: What needs to be moved, how, and over what distance?
 - The Load: Consider the child's movement and behaviour.
 - The Environment: Ensure safe conditions (clear pathways, suitable lighting).
 - The Individual: Assess the staff member's capability (consider health conditions, pregnancy).

Correct Lifting Procedure

Planning

- Assess the task before starting: know what is being lifted, where it is going, and the best route.
- If the load is too heavy, seek help or use equipment (e.g., trolley).
- Ensure proper clothing, including non-slip footwear, is worn.
- Clear the area of obstructions and ensure adequate lighting.

Lifting Technique

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, leading leg slightly forward.
- Bend your knees, keeping your back straight.
- Tuck in your chin and lean slightly forward.
- Grip the load securely at the base.
- Lift smoothly to waist height, avoiding twisting.

Carrying Children Safely

- Where possible, ask the child to position themselves for an easy lift.
- Carry children centrally in front of your body (not on the hip).
- Avoid carrying other items when carrying a child.
- If a child struggles, put them down and use calming words.
- Pregnant staff and students must not carry children.

Moving the Load

- Keep the load close to your body while moving.
- Use smooth, controlled movements.
- Watch your path and avoid obstacles.
- Lower the load by reversing the lifting process.

Environment Safety

- Maintain clear, well-lit paths for safe movement.
- Ensure the temperature and humidity are comfortable.

Reporting Issues

- Immediately report any injuries or incidents (e.g., strains, slips).
- Tasks must be reassessed if there are changes in conditions or risks.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to ensure it remains effective and compliant with best practices.

Medication

This policy ensures the safe administration of medication to children within the nursery. Our procedures prioritise the health and safety of all children while maintaining clear records and securing parental consent.

General Guidelines

- Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) will only be administered with written parental consent.
- Prescription medicines must be prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist and must be in the original packaging.
- Medicines containing aspirin will only be administered if prescribed by a doctor.
- A written record will be kept each time medicine is administered, and parents will be informed on the same day.

Prescription Medication

- Only administered to the child named on the prescription label, following the prescribed dosage.
- Children on antibiotics must have been on their course for at least 48 hours before attending nursery.
- The medication must be in its original container with clear instructions.
- Parents must complete and sign a medication form specifying the dosage and timing.
- Any change in dosage or medication requires a new form.
- Medication exceeding the recommended dose will not be given without a doctor's note.
- Staff will verify the last administered dose with parents at drop-off and record this information.
- Only staff with up-to-date first aid training will administer medication.

Non-Prescription Medication

- Only administered for a specific condition as recommended by a pharmacist.
- For emergencies (e.g., high fever), Calpol may be administered with prior written parental consent.
- Non-prescription creams for skin conditions require parental consent.
- Teething gel or Calpol for severe teething symptoms may be given with written consent and verbal confirmation from parents.
- If a child shows severe symptoms, parents will be contacted immediately, and emergency services may be called if necessary.

Emergency Medication

- Emergency medications (e.g., inhalers, epipens) are stored safely but remain easily accessible to staff.
- Parents must provide clear instructions on administering emergency medication.

Record Keeping

- A medication form must be completed by parents for each medication, detailing:

- Child's name.
 - Medication name.
 - Dosage and timing.
 - Date and time last administered.
- Staff must record the administration of medication, including time, dosage, and staff initials.

Staff Medication

- Staff must store personal medication in the staff room, away from children.
- Staff must inform management if their medication may impact their ability to work safely.
- No staff medication should be kept in child-accessible areas, except for inhalers stored securely with children's medication.

First Aid Boxes

- First aid boxes are accessible to staff but out of children's reach.
- Only items permitted by the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 are stored (e.g., sterile dressings, bandages).
- No medications (e.g., paracetamol) are stored in first aid boxes.

Storage of Medication

- All medication for children must be clearly labelled with the child's name and stored securely.
- Medications requiring refrigeration are kept in a designated staffroom fridge.
- Emergency medication (inhalers, epipens) is easily accessible but securely stored.
- Nursery-provided medicines (e.g., Calpol, Piriton) are stored in the office and returned after use.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with best practices.

No Smoking / Vaping Policy

The health and well-being of children are the top priorities at First Steps. Given the known health risks of smoking, we adhere to a strict no smoking policy within all nursery buildings and grounds. It is illegal to smoke in enclosed spaces.

Policy Guidelines:

- Smoking / vaping is prohibited on the nursery premises by staff, students, parents, carers, visitors, and contractors.
- Staff accompanying children outside the nursery are also prohibited from smoking / vaping.
- Parents accompanying children on outings must refrain from smoking / vaping while in the care of children.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke / vape while wearing nursery uniforms, as they are role models for children, promoting a healthy lifestyle.

While we understand smoking is a personal choice, we advocate for healthy living and are committed to supporting those who wish to quit. We provide:

- Factsheets and leaflets on quitting
- Information on local support groups
- Details for the NHS quit smoking helpline: www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- Information on available quitting products
- In-house support for staff and parents

Nursery Security Policy

Ensuring the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors is a top priority at First Steps. This policy outlines the procedures for securing the nursery premises and managing the safe arrival and departure of children.

Security Procedures

Access Control

- All external nursery access points, including gates and front doors, must remain locked at all times.
- A secure buzzer system is in place at the main entrance for staff, parents, and visitors. Only staff members are permitted to operate the buzzer.
- Staff must verify the identity of any visitor through the glass of the door before granting access.
- Unknown individuals must be met in person at the door. They should never be allowed entry via the buzzer.
- Parents, students, and visitors should never use the buzzer to allow access to others.

Fire Exits and Windows

- Fire exit gates are to be locked from the inside, allowing for immediate emergency exit if needed.
- Fire doors are unlocked at the start of the day and locked at the end of the day.
- All windows must be securely closed at the end of each day.

Preschool Building Access

- The preschool building is equipped with a peephole for visual verification of visitors.
- As there is no buzzer system in the preschool building, staff must answer the door personally and ensure that no unauthorised individuals are allowed inside.
- All queries and visitors must be directed to the main entrance and recorded in the daily log or signing-in sheet.

Arrivals and Departures Procedures

Child Arrivals

- Each child is warmly welcomed upon arrival by a designated staff member, typically from their room.
- Parents are encouraged to share any relevant information about their child with the staff, which should be recorded in the room.
- If a parent requests medication administration during the day, staff must follow the Medication Procedure.

Child Departures

- Staff must ensure that children are only released to known parents or authorised adults.

- If staff members are unsure of the identity of the individual they must check their identity with another member of staff.
- If another adult is to collect the child, we ask the parents to make us aware of who will be picking up and a predetermined procedure must be followed, including password verification.
- No child should be handed over to anyone other than the known parent unless a prior agreement has been made. If in doubt staff should check the person's identity by ringing the child's parent or their emergency contact number.
- Medications are retrieved from the storage area only when the parent has arrived and must be handed over directly, following the Medication Policy.
- Staff should sign each child in and out as they arrive and depart the nursery.

Visitor Arrivals and Departures

- All visitors must complete the signing-in and signing-out records upon entry and exit.
- Visitors are supervised in accordance with the Supervision of Visitors Policy.

Monitoring and Compliance

- Staff are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy at all times.
- Regular training and reminders will be provided to ensure all staff are aware of security and safety procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to maintain the safety and security of the nursery setting.

Nutrition and Mealtimes

Mealtimes at First Steps should be enjoyable and social, fostering positive interactions among children and staff. We are committed to providing healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks tailored to meet individual needs.

Our Commitment:

Balanced Meals & Snacks:

A healthy and balanced breakfast, midday meal, tea, and daily snacks will be provided for children attending a full day at the nursery.

Menu Planning & Rotation:

Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly, and reflect cultural diversity and variation. We follow the governments Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance. Menus are available for parents to view, upon request.

Healthy Choices:

The food provided will avoid large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings. At least three servings of fresh fruit and vegetables will be included in the daily meals.

Involvement in Menu Planning:

Parents and children will be involved in the review of menus.

Water Availability:

Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and frequently offered to children and babies.

Individual Dietary Needs:

The nursery will respect individual dietary requirements. Information about children's dietary needs, including allergies, will be gathered from parents. If appropriate, a risk assessment will be carried out to ensure a suitable individual dietary plan.

Sensitivity to Diets & Allergies:

Staff will show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies, and will avoid labelling or singling out children because of their dietary needs.

Modelling Healthy Eating:

Meal and snack times will be organised to encourage social interaction and participation in small groups. Children will be encouraged to use manners and engage in conversation.

Encouraging Independence:

Children will be supported to develop independence by making choices, serving their

food, and feeding themselves. Staff will guide children in making healthy food choices and understanding the importance of healthy eating.

Cultural Respect:

Meals will include foods from children's cultural backgrounds, providing familiar foods while introducing them to new ones. Cultural differences in eating habits will be respected.

Addressing Food Refusal:

Any child who shows signs of distress at a meal will have their food removed without fuss. Children not on special diets will be encouraged to try a small portion of everything.

Mealtime Flexibility:

Children who refuse to eat during the meal will be offered food later in the day.

Time to Eat:

Children will be given time to eat at their own pace and will never be rushed.

Age-Appropriate Portions:

Food portions will be suitable for the children's age and needs.

Promoting Healthy Eating:

Positive attitudes to healthy eating will be promoted through play opportunities and discussions.

Daily Feeding Records for Children Under Three:

Parents will be provided with daily written and / or verbal records of feeding routines for all children.

Safety During Meal Times:

No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to ensure there is no risk of choking.

Packed Lunch Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits and ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

Packed Lunch Provision

We understand that some parents may prefer to provide a packed lunch for their child. To maintain high standards of hygiene and food safety, please note:

- We do not have facilities to refrigerate or chill packed lunches. Therefore, all packed lunches must be suitable for storage at room temperature.
- Perishable items such as dairy products, meats, or items requiring refrigeration should not be included in packed lunches unless supplied in a cool box with an ice pack.

Healthy Eating

To promote good nutrition, we encourage parents to include a balanced variety of foods such as:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Sandwiches or wraps with healthy fillings
- Yogurt (if suitably chilled)
- Water or diluted juice (no sugary drinks)

We ask that parents avoid sweets, chocolate, nuts, and fizzy drinks due to allergy and health considerations.

Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

If your child has any allergies or special dietary requirements, please inform nursery staff in writing. We have a strict no nuts policy to protect children with severe allergies.

Inclusion

Children who bring packed lunches will be included fully in mealtimes and social routines with other children. Nursery staff will provide support where needed.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

Parental Partnership Policy

At First Steps, we believe that for children to receive quality care and early learning tailored to their individual needs, a close partnership between parents and staff is essential. Two-way communication and the sharing of information are key to achieving this. The nursery team welcomes parents as partners in the child's learning and development, and this relationship should be built on trust and mutual understanding. Practitioners aim to support parents in an open and sensitive manner, fostering a positive and collaborative approach.

Our Commitment:

Recognising Parents as Primary Educators:

We acknowledge parents as their child's first and most important educators and welcome them into the life of the nursery.

Building Confidence:

We aim to help parents trust their instincts and judgment regarding their child's needs and encourage their active participation in nursery life.

Open Door Policy:

Parents are always welcome at the nursery, and they are encouraged to visit at any time.

Supporting Nursing Mothers:

The nursery provides a private area for nursing mothers whenever needed, offering both space and privacy.

Policy Awareness:

All parents will be made aware of the nursery's policies and procedures. A detailed parent prospectus will be provided, and the full policy documents will be available for parents at all times on the nursery's website.

Regular Communication:

We maintain regular contact with parents to build a secure and beneficial working relationship for their child.

Sharing Information:

Nursery activities and events will be communicated to parents through newsletters, the nursery website, Facebook, the noticeboard, and verbal feedback.

Key Person System:

We operate a key person system to foster a close working relationship with parents. This system facilitates two-way information sharing about each child's individual needs at nursery and at home.

Regular Progress Updates:

Parents will be informed about their child's progress regularly. They will also be

encouraged to meet with their child's key worker when a summary of progress is handed out.

Listening to Parental Feedback:

We will consider and discuss suggestions from parents concerning their child's care and early learning and any aspects of the nursery's operations.

Parental Involvement in Nursery Activities:

Parents will be encouraged to contribute their skills, knowledge, and interests to the nursery's activities.

Complaint/Feedback Procedures:

All parents will be informed of the systems for registering queries, compliments, complaints, or suggestions. We will ensure these systems are well understood by all parents. Our written complaints procedure is available to parents.

Understanding Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the learning processes of young children both in the nursery and at home.

Written Contract for Nursery Arrangements:

A written contract will be provided to all parents outlining the conditions of acceptance and arrangements for payment.

Respect for Religious & Cultural Beliefs:

We respect each family's religious and cultural backgrounds and beliefs, striving to accommodate any special requirements whenever possible and practical.

Feedback and Nursery Development:

We will regularly gather feedback from parents through questionnaires, a suggestion system, and reviews of our working practices. This feedback will be evaluated to promote nursery practice, policy development, and staff growth.

Photography and Recording Device Use Policy

This policy outlines the nursery's approach to using photographs and recordings of children, ensuring that their privacy, safety, and the wishes of parents and guardians are always respected.

Obtaining Parental Consent

- **Written Consent:** Written parental permission for photographing or recording children is obtained at the time of registration.
- **Regular Review:** Consent is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date.
- **Clear Permission Options:** Parents are provided with options to grant or deny permission for different uses, including:
 - Use in the child's learning journey (Tapestry).
 - Display purposes within the nursery.
 - Promotional materials (nursery website, brochures, and local press).
- **Awareness of Background Appearances:**
Parents are informed that their child may appear in the background of another child's photograph, primarily for learning journey purposes.

Respecting Parental Wishes

- **Adhering to Permissions:** If a parent does not consent to one or more uses, the nursery will respect their decision.
- **Alternative Recording Methods:** Where necessary, alternative methods of recording the child's play and learning will be used to ensure compliance.

Staff Usage Guidelines

- **Authorised Devices Only:** Staff are only permitted to take photographs or recordings using nursery-provided devices.
- **No Personal Devices:** Personal devices (such as mobile phones) must not be used for this purpose.
- **Monitoring:** The nursery manager is responsible for monitoring all photographs and recordings to ensure compliance with parental wishes and policy guidelines.

Parental Use of Cameras and Recording Devices

- **Permission Required:** Parents are not allowed to use recording devices or cameras on nursery premises without prior consent from the nursery manager.
- **Special Events:** During special events (e.g., Christmas plays), permission must be obtained to ensure all children included in photographs or videos have parental consent.
- **Restricted Sharing:** Parents must not repost or share any photos from the nursery's online platform (e.g., Tapestry) that contain other children.

Data Security and Storage

- **Secure Storage:** All photographs and recordings taken by the nursery are securely stored.
- **Retention Period:** Images are only retained for as long as necessary and are deleted in accordance with data protection regulations.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required, ensuring it remains compliant with current regulations and best practices.

Risk Assessment Policy

This policy provides an overview of our approach to risk assessment, with further details on specific risks covered within other relevant policies.

Safeguarding and Training

- **Safeguarding Compliance:** All staff must follow our Safeguarding Policy, which covers risks of harm to children and outlines how to observe and report concerns. All staff will receive a copy of this policy upon starting.

Daily Risk Assessments

- **Room and Equipment Checks:** Each room must complete a daily risk assessment upon entry to ensure the safety of the room and equipment for the children. This includes:
 - Checking the gardens before children go out to play.
 - Removing any hazards or broken toys from children's reach.
 - Reporting any hazards to management immediately.
- **Cleanliness Assessment:** Each room is responsible for completing a cleanliness risk assessment daily, ensuring the rooms are clean and suitable for children. Any issues with equipment or resources should be reported to management.

Specific Risk Assessments

- **Outings:** All outings must have their own risk assessments completed prior to departure (see Visits and Outings Policy).
- **Staff Health and Safety:** Staff who are pregnant, have health concerns, or have incoming injuries must speak with management. This allows for the creation of an individualised risk assessment to ensure their safety and the safety of the children.
- **Fire Safety:** Fire safety procedures, including fire drills, are outlined in the Fire Safety Policy.

Ongoing Risk Management

- **Immediate Hazard Response:** Staff must be vigilant throughout the day for emerging risks and take immediate action to remove or minimise them (e.g., clearing spillages, removing broken toys).
- **Age-Appropriate Activities:** Staff must ensure that all activities and resources are age-appropriate for the children they are supervising. If unsure, they should consult with room leaders or management.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required, ensuring it remains compliant with current regulations and best practices.

Safer Recruitment of Staff

At First Steps, we are vigilant in our recruitment procedures, aiming to ensure that all individuals working with children are qualified and suitable to do so. This policy outlines the procedures we follow each time we recruit a new member to our team.

Advertising

- We use reputable recruitment websites, government websites and the local job centre to advertise any vacancies.
- All recruitment literature includes details of our Equal Opportunities Policy and our Safer Recruitment Procedures, including the requirement for an enhanced DBS check and at least two independent references for each new employee.
- Applicants are provided with an application information pack, which includes:
 - Information about the nursery.
 - A job description and person specification.
 - A criminal records self-disclosure form.

Interview Stage

- Shortlisting:
 - Candidates are shortlisted against a pre-set specification.
- Identity and Eligibility Checks:
 - All shortlisted candidates must bring photo identification (e.g., passport, driving licence) and proof of address.
 - Candidates must provide proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
- Interview Process:
 - The interview panel will consist of the Childcare Manager and one of the Business Manager or Assistant Manager.
 - Candidates are questioned using a set list of criteria covering:
 - Safeguarding children.
 - Planning suitable activities.
 - Understanding the legal frameworks related to childcare.
 - Candidates are scored based on their answers, experience, and qualifications.
- Selection:
 - The panel will choose the most suitable candidate based on scores, knowledge of the Early Years Framework, and nursery needs.
 - Candidates will be notified of the outcome, whether successful or not.

Starting Work

- Conditional Offer:
 - The successful candidate is offered the position, subject to two satisfactory references:
 - Previous employers (or tutor for newly qualified students).
 - A personal or professional reference (e.g., GP).
 - References will be verbally verified before employment, followed by written confirmation.

- **DBS Checks:**
 - An enhanced DBS check will be initiated before employment begins.
 - An enhanced DBS must be completed before the employee can start their employment.
- **Qualification Verification:**
 - All qualifications will be checked, and copies will be kept on file.
- **Induction Period:**
 - New staff will receive an intensive induction period, including:
 - Reading and discussing nursery policies and procedures.
 - Assignment of a mentor for support.
 - Training on safeguarding children and understanding the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy.
 - Regular meetings with the manager and mentor will be held to review progress.

Ongoing Support and Checks

- **Staff Responsibility:**
 - Staff must notify the manager of any circumstances affecting their suitability to work with children (including incidents outside of nursery).
 - Disciplinary action may be taken if staff fail to notify the manager in a timely manner.
- **Regular Appraisals and Supervision:**
 - Staff will receive an annual appraisal meeting with the Business Manager and regular supervision meetings with the Childcare Manager.
 - These meetings will cover:
 - Performance in the previous six months.
 - Training needs for the following six months.
- **Additional Support:**
 - The Manager, Deputy, and Room Leaders will provide ongoing support, including:
 - Mentor support.
 - One-to-one training sessions.
 - Work-based observations.
 - Constructive feedback.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required, ensuring it remains compliant with current regulations and best practices.

Safety Checks

At First Steps, we are committed to ensuring a safe environment for all children, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines the procedures for conducting safety checks and maintaining a secure environment within the nursery.

Daily Safety Checks

- Written checks must be completed daily on the premises, both indoors and outdoors, including all equipment and resources, before children access any areas.
- All staff must maintain constant awareness of the nursery environment, continuously monitoring safety.

Risk Assessments

- Comprehensive risk assessments are conducted at least annually and reviewed regularly.
- These assessments cover potential risks to children, staff, and visitors, identifying hazards and control measures.
- Risk assessments are updated, or new assessments are completed when significant changes occur (e.g., new equipment is introduced).
- All staff are trained in the risk assessment process to ensure compliance and understanding.
- Outings are individually risk-assessed. (See Visits and Outings Policy for details).
- Risk assessment documents must include:
 - Identification of hazards.
 - Those at risk.
 - Existing safety measures.
 - Severity of the risk/injury.
 - Additional actions needed.
 - Responsibility for actions.
 - Frequency of actions.
 - Monitoring procedures.

Electrical Equipment

- Electrical cables are kept out of children's reach wherever possible and shielded by furniture if necessary.
- Electrical sockets are risk assessed, and safety measures are implemented to protect children.

Mains Information

- Locations of key mains controls:
 - Water stop tap: Poynton High School.
 - Gas point: Side of building near the kitchen.
 - Fuse box: Next to the utility room.
 - Main electricity box: Next to the utility room.

Dangerous Substances (COSHH)

- All dangerous substances, including chemicals, must be stored in locked areas, out of children's reach.
- Substances must remain in their original containers with original labels intact.
- Safety Data Sheets (COSHH) and risk assessments must be maintained for all substances.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons, and goggles must be used when handling hazardous substances.

Hot Drinks and Food

- Hot drinks are permitted only in the staff room or Office.
- No canned drinks, sweets, or crisps are to be stored or consumed in the nursery rooms.

Transport and Outings

- Comprehensive arrangements are in place for the safe transportation and supervision of children during outings.
- A separate Visits and Outings Policy provides detailed health and safety procedures for external activities.

Room Temperatures

- Staff must monitor room temperatures at all times to ensure the comfort of children.
- Minimum temperature guidelines:
 - Baby rooms: No less than 18°C.
 - All other areas: No less than 16°C.
- Fans, when used, must be positioned with care to ensure safety.

Water Supplies

- Fresh drinking water is available to all children, staff, and visitors at all times.
- Hot water taps accessible to children are thermostatically controlled to a maximum of 40°C.

Gas Appliances

- All gas appliances are inspected annually by a registered Gas Safety Register engineer.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are installed and regularly tested.

Safe Sleep Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to providing a safe, calm, and nurturing sleep environment for every child. This policy outlines the procedures our team follows to ensure children sleep safely and comfortably, in line with the EYFS statutory framework, Lullaby Trust guidance, and NHS safe sleep recommendations.

Principles

- Children's individual sleep needs and routines are respected.
- Staff remain vigilant and responsive throughout sleep times.
- Sleep environments are kept **safe, supervised, and free from hazards**.
- Parents are partners in establishing consistent, healthy sleep habits.

Sleep Environment

We ensure that all sleep spaces are:

- Well-ventilated, at a comfortable temperature (ideally 16–20°C).
- Free from loose bedding, pillows, soft toys, bumpers, or comforters for babies under 12 months.
- Equipped with firm, flat mattresses or sleep mat.
- Organised so that staff have clear visibility of every sleeping child.
- Kept quiet and calm, with soft lighting where appropriate.

Safe Sleep Practices for Babies (0–12 months)

Staff follow these core practices:

- Babies are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- Feet are positioned at the foot of the cot ("feet to foot").
- Blankets (if used) are tucked in securely at chest height.
- Sleep bags are used only if they are the correct size and tog rating.
- Babies are never put to sleep in bouncers, car seats, swings, or prams indoors.
- Hats, bibs, and hooded clothing are removed before sleep.
- Dummies (if used) are offered without clips or cords.

Safe Sleep Practices for Toddlers and Older Children

- Children sleep on appropriate beds, mats, or cots depending on age.
- Staff ensure children are comfortable but not overheated.
- Comfort items (e.g., soft toys) may be used if age-appropriate and agreed with parents.
- Children are supported to rest even if they do not sleep.

Supervision and Monitoring

- Staff conduct physical checks every 5–10 minutes, checking:
 - breathing
 - colour
 - position
 - general wellbeing
- Checks are documented on the room's sleep chart.

- Staff remain in the room and maintain direct line of sight at all times.
- Children are never left to sleep in a separate room unsupervised.

Individual Sleep Plans

For babies under 12 months, or any child with specific needs, we create an Individual Sleep Plan with parents, covering:

- preferred routines.
- comfort strategies.
- medical considerations.
- parental preferences where they are safe sleep recommended.
- any risk factors (e.g., reflux).

Children with Reflux or Medical Needs

- Babies with reflux are still placed on their backs, unless written medical advice states otherwise.
- No wedges, positioners, or rolled towels are used.
- Staff follow any medical plans agreed with parents and health professionals.

Hygiene and Safety

- Bedding is washed weekly or immediately if soiled.
- Each child has their own bedding, stored separately.
- Cots and sleep mats are cleaned daily.
- Damaged equipment is removed from use.

Partnership with Parents

We work closely with parents to:

- understand home routines.
- share sleep patterns and observations.
- support healthy sleep habits.
- communicate any concerns promptly.

Parents are informed of sleep times via daily updates.

Staff Training

All staff receive training on safe sleep guidance and emergency procedures.

Emergency Procedures

If a child is found unresponsive:

- Staff follow Paediatric Emergency First Aid Procedure.
- Emergency services are called immediately.
- Parents are contacted as soon as possible.
- An incident form is completed and reported to relevant authorities.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if guidance changes.

Safe Use of Mobile Devices and Digital Technology Policy

This policy ensures that staff maintain professional conduct regarding digital technology, mobile device usage and social networking, safeguarding the reputation of the nursery and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Mobile Phone Usage

- Staff must keep mobile phones turned off and stored in the staff room during working hours.
- Phones may only be used during designated breaks and must be away from children.
- In case of emergency, family members can contact staff via the nursery landline.
- On outings, one staff member may carry a mobile phone for safety, with management's approval. This phone is for emergency use only.
- No photographs of children are to be taken on personal phones.

Social Networking Guidelines

- Staff must maintain a professional online presence and avoid posting any content that may harm the nursery's reputation.
- Staff must not post anything that could offend parents, colleagues, or damage the nursery's image.
- Direct reference to the nursery, its staff, children, or families is strictly prohibited.
- If staff choose to connect with parents on social media, interactions must remain professional at all times.
- Violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Parent Mobile Phone Usage

- Parents are not permitted to use mobile phones within the nursery premises.
- If a parent must take a call, they will be asked to use the reception area or office.
- Parents are prohibited from taking photographs within the nursery unless explicitly authorised for special events (e.g., Nativity).

Smart Devices

- Staff are not permitted to wear smartwatches within the nursery rooms.
- Personal tablets/iPads may only be used in the staffroom during breaks.
- No personal cameras are allowed for photographing children, indoors or outdoors.

Tablets for Tapestry

- Nursery-provided tablets are designated for recording observations on Tapestry only.
- Staff must not use these tablets for any other purpose or access the internet.

- Tablets may only be taken on outings for observations with management's prior approval.

Interactive Whiteboard Usage

An interactive whiteboard has been introduced in the preschool room as an educational resource to enhance children's learning experiences. To ensure safe and appropriate use in line with our safeguarding and ICT policies:

- **Internet Access:** The interactive whiteboard will remain disconnected from the internet at all times while children are present in the room.
- **Wi-Fi Settings:** Access to Wi-Fi settings will be password protected. Only designated members of management will have access to this password.
- **Supervised Use:** Any use of the interactive whiteboard will be supervised by a staff member, and content will be age-appropriate and in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.
- **Maintenance and Updates:** Internet connectivity may be enabled for maintenance or content updates only when no children are present. This will be carried out by management or a designated staff member under supervision.

Screen Time

Screens are only used when they have a clear educational purpose and directly support children's learning and development. They never replace responsive adult-child interaction, storytelling, conversation, or real-world experiences.

Under 2s: Screens are avoided except in exceptional circumstances.

Ages 2–5: Screen time is limited to no more than one hour per day, and less where possible. Screen use in the setting is limited and purposeful focused on short educational clips to support learning and we are mindful that many children already access screens at home.

This approach aligns with our ongoing commitment to safeguarding children and ensuring that all digital tools used within the setting are safe, secure, and used responsibly. This policy is mandatory for all staff, and any breach may lead to disciplinary action. The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

Settling In

At First Steps, we are committed to ensuring that every child feels safe, secure, and happy within our care. Our Settling in Policy is designed to support children and their families as they transition into our nursery environment. We aim to provide a welcoming and inclusive experience that fosters trust and comfort for both children and parents.

Objectives

- To ensure children feel safe, happy, and stimulated in our nursery.
- To build a strong partnership with parents, promoting confidence in their child's well-being.
- To tailor the settling-in process to the individual needs and circumstances of each child and their family.

Settling-In Procedures Our team at First Steps is dedicated to making the settling-in process smooth and reassuring for all families. Our procedures include:

1. Pre-Admission Information and Visits:

- Parents are provided with comprehensive information about our nursery policies and procedures.
- Parents and children are encouraged to visit the nursery in the weeks leading up to their start date.

2. Planned Settling-In Sessions:

- We offer free settling-in sessions over a one or two-week period, depending on the child's individual needs, age, and developmental stage.
- Parents are welcome to stay with their child during these sessions until both feel comfortable.

3. Parent-Child Separation Guidance:

- Parents are encouraged to gradually separate from their child, starting with short periods and increasing as the child becomes more comfortable.

4. Key Person Allocation:

- Each child is assigned a Key Person who will be their primary point of contact, offering personalised support to both the child and their family.
- If a child develops a stronger bond with another staff member, we will review the Key Person allocation to best support the child's emotional well-being.

5. Parental Reassurance and Communication:

- Our team is available to reassure parents whose children may take longer to settle.
- We respect the needs of families who cannot stay for extended periods and ensure they are kept informed of their child's progress.

6. Safety Assurance:

- Children will not be taken on any external outings until they are fully settled in the nursery.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our children and families.

Sickness and Illness

At First Steps, the health and well-being of all children is our top priority. This policy outlines our approach to managing sickness and illness within the nursery to ensure a safe and healthy environment for children, staff, and families. We adhere to NHS guidelines and Public Health England recommendations to manage illnesses effectively.

General Principles

- Children who are unwell should not attend nursery.
- Our staff will follow the latest advice from NHS and Public Health England to protect all children.

Procedures for Managing Illness

1. Illness During Nursery Hours:

- If a child becomes unwell during the nursery day, parents will be contacted to collect their child as soon as possible.
- The child will be cared for in a quiet, comfortable area with their Key Person until collection.

2. Infectious Illnesses:

- Children with infectious illnesses (e.g., sickness and diarrhoea) should not attend nursery until they have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours.
- We will follow NHS and Public Health guidelines to manage outbreaks of contagious conditions (e.g., chickenpox).
- Parents will be informed if a contagious illness is identified in the nursery, and necessary cleaning protocols will be implemented.

3. Antibiotics and Exclusion:

- **Initial 48-hour exclusion:**
Children who have been prescribed antibiotics should remain at home for the first 48 hours of treatment. This allows time for the medication to take effect and ensures the child is well enough to return to nursery.
- **When antibiotics and Calpol are both prescribed:**
If a doctor has prescribed antibiotics and has stated that Calpol is also required, staff may administer the medication in line with the nursery's medication policy and parental consent. In this situation, the child may remain at nursery if they are otherwise well enough.

4. Teething

- If children show signs of teething, we can offer teething gel (or parents' preference), teething rings and Calpol if necessary.
- If the child is still upset or distressed after Calpol, we will recontact parents to discuss next steps.

- Common signs of teething in babies, which often begin around 6 months but can start as early as 3 months, include increased drooling, chewing on toys or fingers, irritability, and tender, red, or swollen gum.

5. Admission Refusal:

- The nursery reserves the right to refuse admission to a child who is visibly unwell. This decision is made by the manager on duty and is non-negotiable.

6. Day after Vaccinations:

- If a child requires Calpol the day after a vaccination, staff may administer it in line with the nursery's medication policy and with appropriate parental consent.
- The child can remain at nursery as long as they are otherwise well enough.

7. Sending Children Home:

- A child will be sent home if they have:
 - Sickness (vomiting)
 - Three or more incidents of diarrhoea
 - A high temperature (Calpol may be given with parental consent while awaiting collection)
 - A rash of unknown origin (unless a pre-existing condition is known)
 - Symptoms of being generally unwell.

8. Covid-19 and Other Specific Guidelines:

- We will follow the most recent government guidelines for managing Covid-19 and any other emerging health concerns.

9. Meningitis Procedure

- If we are informed of a case of meningitis, we will immediately follow advice from Public Health England and inform Ofsted.
- Guidance and support will be provided to staff and parents based on the situation.

Transporting Children to Hospital Procedure

- If a child's condition is severe, we will call an ambulance immediately.
- A senior staff member will accompany the child, taking registration forms, any relevant medication, and a comforter.
- The parent will be contacted to meet at the hospital, and a member of the management team will be informed.
- Staff will remain calm and provide comfort to any children who may be affected by the situation.

Procedures for High Temperature

If a child appears unwell, we will begin by checking their temperature. If Calpol is needed for a high temperature, parents are required to pick up their child immediately.

37.9°C (100.2°F) or below

- We will continue to monitor the child closely.
- Recheck the temperature in 30 minutes.
- Observe for any changes in behaviour, comfort, or symptoms.

38.0°C (100.4°F) – 38.5°C (101.3°F)

- Contact parents to inform them of the temperature and how the child is presenting.
- We will ask parents if they would like us to administer Calpol (and pick up their child) or monitor the child for a further 30 minutes.
- If the temperature remains at or above 38°C, parents will be called again to update them and let them know the child requires Calpol and someone to pick them up.

38.5°C (101.3°F) or above

- Call parents immediately to inform them the child needs Calpol and picking up immediately.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it aligns with the latest health guidance and best practices. It is essential that this policy is in place to provide clarity and consistency for all parties.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At First Steps, we are committed to providing an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming environment for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Our policy is guided by the following legislation and best practices:

- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Definition of SEND

According to the SEND Code of Practice (2015), a child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability requiring special educational provision. This can include:

- Greater difficulty in learning than others of the same age.
- A disability preventing access to typical facilities available to peers.

Statement of Intent

We believe every child has the right to learn and develop alongside their peers in an inclusive environment. We strive to:

- Respect and celebrate the diversity of all children.
- Provide personalised support based on individual needs.
- Work in partnership with parents, respecting their insights.
- Ensure no child is discriminated against due to their needs.

Identification and Support

We follow a graduated approach to identifying and supporting children with SEND, involving four key stages:

1. **Assess:** Observing and identifying children who may have additional needs through regular monitoring and feedback from parents and staff.
2. **Plan:** Collaborating with parents, the SENCO, and external professionals to develop an individualised plan for support.
3. **Do:** Implementing agreed strategies and interventions, led by the child's Key Person with support from the SENCO.
4. **Review:** Regularly assessing the effectiveness of the support, making necessary adjustments.

Role of the SENCO

Our nursery SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is Corrina Bennett, with Deputy SENCO, Tina Woodward. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities towards children with SEND.
- Advising and supporting colleagues.
- Coordinating support for children with SEND.

- Liaising with parents and external professionals.

Support Strategies

- Differentiated activities and individualised learning plans.
- Close communication with parents and external agencies.
- Regular training for staff on SEND awareness and support techniques.
- Reasonable adjustments to the environment for accessibility.

Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP)

For children with significant needs, an EHCP needs assessment may be initiated in collaboration with parents and local authorities. Our role includes:

- Providing evidence and observations to support the assessment.
- Working with professionals to develop a personalised EHCP.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the plan in collaboration with parents.

Working with External Professionals

We actively collaborate with external agencies, including health, education, and social care professionals, to ensure children with SEND receive comprehensive support.

Parental Involvement

Parents are essential partners in supporting their child's development. We:

- Maintain open, respectful communication.
- Involve parents in decision-making regarding their child's care.
- Provide information and guidance on available support services.

Our SEND Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current best practices and meets the needs of children and families.

Staff Development and Training Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to supporting the professional growth and development of all staff members. We believe that well-trained, motivated, and supported staff are essential for providing high-quality care and education for the children in our setting. This policy outlines our approach to staff development, training, and continuous professional improvement.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that all staff have access to high-quality training and development opportunities that enhance their skills and knowledge.
- To maintain a minimum of 50% of staff qualified to Level 3 (or equivalent) in childcare and education.
- To promote a positive culture of continuous professional development (CPD) within the nursery.

Staff Training Requirements

- All staff members will have a personalised training record and training plan.
- At least 50% of staff will hold a Level 3 qualification in childcare or above.
- Remaining staff will be qualified to Level 2 or actively working towards a relevant qualification.
- New staff will receive a comprehensive induction, including a mentor for support.

Training Methods

- **External Training:** Staff are encouraged to attend relevant external training courses.
- **In-House Training:** Regular training sessions will be held on topics such as safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, and child development.
- **Noodle Now Online Training:** Staff will have access to Noodle Now online training, linked with in-house training where appropriate.
- **Peer Learning:** Staff are encouraged to share knowledge and best practices with their colleagues.

Supervision and Appraisals

- Supervisions will be conducted every other month to discuss staff performance, set objectives, and identify training needs.
- Performance appraisals will take place twice a year, allowing staff to reflect on their progress and set goals for further development.

Staff Meetings and Communication

- Regular staff meetings will be held to discuss strategy, policy, and activity planning.
- Team meetings will provide opportunities for staff to share ideas and best practices.
- Staff are encouraged to suggest improvements and contribute to the nursery's continuous improvement.

Support and Mentoring

- All new staff will be assigned a mentor to provide support and guidance during their induction period.
- Staff with specific expertise will be encouraged to share their knowledge with colleagues.
- Ongoing coaching will be provided to enhance staff skills and confidence.

Training Evaluation

- All training activities will be evaluated for effectiveness.
- Staff feedback will be used to improve future training sessions.

Training Budget

- A training budget will be allocated annually, ensuring that staff can access high-quality training opportunities.
- The budget will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the nursery's training needs.

Record-Keeping

- Training records will be maintained for each staff member, detailing completed courses and CPD activities.
- Supervision and appraisal records will be stored securely and reviewed regularly.

This Staff Development and Training Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the nursery and reflects best practices.

Staff Working with Own Children / Closely Related

At First Steps, we understand that returning to work after having a baby or working in the same environment as your child or close relative can be challenging. Our goal is to support a smooth transition for both staff and children. To achieve this, we encourage staff members to meet with the nursery manager and, when appropriate, the room leader to discuss the needs of everyone involved.

While we value and support our staff, we believe it is important that all children are treated equally and fairly. Therefore, it may not always be suitable for staff to care for their own child or close relative during their working hours. However, we are committed to finding a solution that works for everyone, balancing both the staff's needs and the nursery's commitment to providing quality care.

Key Guidelines:

1. Working with Your Own Child or Close Relative

- If a staff member works in the same room as their child or close relative, we will develop a clear set of guidelines in collaboration with the staff member. These guidelines will set expectations for how the staff member will work with their child or relative.
- If any issues arise or the arrangement begins to impact the care of the children in the room, the nursery manager and staff member will reassess the situation.

2. Fair Treatment of All Children

- When caring for another staff member's child, the staff member is expected to treat them as they would any other child in their care. No special treatment or favouritism will be given to children who have a personal connection to any member of staff.

3. Impact on Care

If the staff member's relationship with their child or close relative is affecting the care of other children in the room:

- The staff member will be moved to a different room, not the child. This ensures the child remains with their age-appropriate peer group and can form consistent relationships with other children.
- Staff will be expected to follow agreed-upon guidelines regarding interactions with their child during working hours. While we understand the importance of seeing your child, we need to minimise disruptions to the routine and reduce any distress caused by seeing a parent leave the room.

4. Staff Shortages

In the event of staffing shortages that require staff members to move rooms efforts will be made to ensure that staff are not placed in a room with their own child or close relative, wherever possible.

5. Breastfeeding Support

- If a staff member's baby requires breastfeeding, we will adapt the above guidelines to accommodate the needs of both the baby and the mother. Cover will be provided during this time to ensure the continuity of care in the room.

Our priority is to ensure that all children in our care receive the best possible experience and attention. By working together, we can create a supportive environment for both staff and children. Clear communication and adherence to these guidelines will help maintain a professional and effective care environment for everyone involved.

Student Placement Policy

At First Steps, we are committed to fostering the development of future childcare professionals by offering meaningful work experience opportunities. We value student placements as an opportunity to share best practices, reflect on our own procedures, and contribute to the training of the next generation of childcare providers.

Placement Guidelines:

- We welcome up to three students at a time to ensure that staff can provide appropriate supervision and support. We also accept small groups or occasional placements for research or studies beneficial to childcare.
- Students must be enrolled in a recognised child-related course or, on occasion, be secondary school pupils on work experience.
- Placements will be arranged through discussions with tutors and the establishment of close links with the relevant educational institutions.

Induction Process:

- Students will attend an interview, followed by an induction session and a tour of the nursery. During the induction, they will be introduced to the nursery's health and safety policies, receive a copy of the Student Handbook, and sign a placement contract.
- All students will undergo an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check before commencing their placement.

Supervision and Expectations:

- Students will be supervised by a designated staff member at all times and will never be left alone with children.
- They will be encouraged to participate fully in the nursery routine and rotate through various areas of the setting to gain a comprehensive experience.

Support and Feedback:

- Throughout the placement, students will receive guidance and constructive feedback from their assigned supervisor.
- A formal evaluation of the student's performance will be provided, and action plans will be offered to support students facing difficulties.
- Tutors will maintain regular contact with the nursery to monitor student progress and receive feedback.

Parent Communication:

- Parents will be informed of student placements via the parent noticeboard, which may include a photograph of the student for clarity.

Code of Conduct:

- Students are required to adhere to the same time-keeping, dress code, and conduct standards as permanent staff.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times, especially regarding the children in our care.

- Students will not be left alone with children and will only assist with tasks like nappy changing when supervised.

We strive to provide students with a supportive and enriching environment that enhances their professional development while maintaining the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

Suncare

At First Steps, we are dedicated to safeguarding the health and well-being of all children in our care, particularly with regard to sun exposure. We recognise the long-term risks of excessive sun exposure, including the increased likelihood of developing malignant melanoma (a dangerous form of skin cancer) later in life.

To ensure the children are adequately protected from the harmful effects of the sun, the following guidelines will be strictly adhered to:

Sun Protection Guidelines:

- Children must bring in a clearly labelled sun hat to be worn when outside in sunny weather.
- Children are required to have their own named and dated sun cream, along with prior written consent for staff to apply it. This ensures that each child uses sun cream suitable for their individual needs.
- Lightweight cotton clothing suitable for sunny weather must be provided, with long sleeves and long pants for children who are prone to sunburn.
- Staff will work closely with parents to ensure that all necessary sun protection, including creams and clothing, is provided and in good condition.
- On hot days, children will not be outside in direct sunlight between 11:15 am and 2:15 pm, when the sun is at its strongest.
- Sun cream will be applied before going outside and reapplied at regular intervals throughout the day, as needed.
- Fresh, cooled water will be offered more frequently throughout sunny or warm days to keep children hydrated.
- Children will be educated about the importance of wearing sun hats, applying sun cream, and drinking more fluids when in the sun.
- Staff will assess the sun's strength and make decisions about the length of time children spend outdoors accordingly.
- Shade will always be available, allowing children the option to cool down or take shelter from the sun when needed.

By following these measures, we aim to ensure that children enjoy outdoor activities safely while minimising the risks associated with sun exposure.

Supervision of Children Policy

At First Steps, the safety and well-being of the children are of utmost importance. It is the responsibility of the nursery manager to ensure that all staff, students, and relief staff are fully informed about health and safety procedures to enable them to appropriately supervise the children in their care.

Supervision Guidelines:

- **Continuous Supervision:** Children must be supervised at all times, whether indoors or outdoors.
- **Water Play:** Children must be closely supervised during water play and when using paddling pools, as even small amounts of water can pose a drowning risk.
- **Large Apparatus:** Special care is required when children are using large play equipment, such as climbing frames, or navigating steps and stairs.
- **Outdoor Play Equipment:** A member of staff must be present and actively supervising large outdoor play equipment at all times.
- **Hazards Outdoors:** Staff must be vigilant and aware of any potential hazards, such as bushes, shrubs, and plants, when children are playing outside.
- **Mealtimes:** Children must be supervised while eating, with particular attention paid to toddlers and babies. Babies will never be left alone with a bottle and must always be fed by a staff member.
- **Use of Scissors and Knives:** Children must be closely supervised when using scissors or knives, especially during cooking activities or creative play.
- **Outings:** During outings, staff-to-child ratios will be increased to ensure adequate supervision and safety. (Refer to the Outings Policy for further details.)

By adhering to these supervision guidelines, we aim to create a safe environment where children can explore, learn, and play without unnecessary risks.

Supervision of Staff Policy

At First Steps, the safety and well-being of the children in our care is our highest priority. The nursery manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff, including students, are thoroughly assessed for suitability to work with children. This includes conducting enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, which must be verified by the inspection body. However, staff may begin working in the nursery before these checks are completed, provided they are always supervised by registered staff.

DBS Clearance and Supervision:

- Staff awaiting their enhanced DBS clearance will be supervised at all times by registered staff until the check is completed and verified.
- All nursery staff will be informed of any staff members who are awaiting DBS clearance.

Restrictions for Staff Awaiting DBS Clearance:

Staff who are awaiting their DBS checks will be restricted from performing the following duties:

- Caring for children without direct supervision
- Taking children to the toilet, unless supervised by registered staff
- Changing nappies
- Being left alone with children, either inside or outdoors
- Administering medication or first aid
- Taking photographs of children
- Accessing or reviewing children's learning and development logs

While adhering to these restrictions, we understand the importance of integrating staff awaiting clearance into the team. They will be included in all other aspects of the nursery day to ensure they feel part of the team and are provided with the necessary support.

Safer Recruitment and Induction:

The enhanced DBS check is only one part of the process to ensure staff suitability. In addition to the DBS clearance, all staff will undergo a thorough recruitment and induction process, as detailed in the Safer Recruitment Policy. This ensures that every staff member is fully vetted and prepared for their role.

- Continuous support, training, and supervision will be provided by nursery management to ensure a safe, secure, and healthy environment for children.

Supervision of Students:

Students will also be interviewed to assess their suitability for the nursery. They will receive a comprehensive induction to ensure they understand and can implement nursery procedures, working practices, and values. Throughout their placement, students will be fully supervised to provide them with the necessary support, training, and information.

By following these policies, we ensure that all staff and students are appropriately vetted, supported, and supervised to maintain a safe, nurturing environment for the children in our care.

Supervision of visitors Policy

At First Steps, we take the safety and security of children, staff, and visitors seriously. To ensure a secure environment, the following procedures must be followed by all staff and visitors:

Visitor Registration and Supervision:

- All visitors must sign the Visitor's Book upon arrival and departure.
- If a visitor will be in the nursery for more than one hour, the nursery manager will ensure they are informed of the fire procedures.
- A member of staff must accompany visitors at all times within the nursery. Visitors should never be left alone with a child unless prior arrangements have been made with the nursery manager.

Security Procedures:

- Staff must verify the identity of any visitors they do not recognise before granting access to the nursery. All visitors should be recorded on the staff/visitor sign-in sheet.
- Contractors accessing the nursery during operational hours must be DBS checked and should not be left unsupervised in any area used by children.
- All external doors and gates must remain locked at all times, and internal doors and gates should be closed to prevent children from wandering outside designated areas.
- Parents, visitors, and students should be reminded not to allow entry to anyone, regardless of whether they know the person. Staff are the only individuals permitted to grant access to the nursery.
- The nursery does not tolerate any form of harassment from third parties, including visitors, towards any individuals, including staff members and parents.

By following these procedures, we ensure that First Steps remains a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for both children and adults.

Supporting Transitions Policy

At First Steps, we recognise that children experience various transitions throughout their early years. These transitions can sometimes be challenging, and our staff are committed to supporting children through these changes with sensitivity and care.

Some common transitions children may experience include:

- Starting nursery
- Moving between rooms within the nursery
- Starting school or moving to a new nursery
- Family breakdowns
- New siblings
- Moving home
- Death of a family member or pet

Our staff are trained to observe the children in their care, identifying changes in behaviour that may signal a difficult transition. We kindly ask parents to inform us of any changes in the home environment, as this information helps staff understand potential shifts in the child's emotional and behavioural needs.

Supporting Transitions within the Nursery

We aim to ensure a smooth transition for all children within the nursery, particularly when they are moving rooms or progressing to a new stage. The following guidelines outline our approach to supporting children through these changes:

Starting Nursery

We follow our Settling in Policy to ensure children feel secure and confident when beginning nursery.

Moving Between Rooms

When a child is ready to transition to a new room due to age or developmental milestones, we will support the child in the following ways:

- The child will spend short, gradual visits in the new room to become familiar with their new surroundings.
- The child's current key worker will accompany them during these visits to provide comfort and consistency.
- Whenever possible, groups of friends will be moved together to maintain established social connections.
- Parents will be regularly updated on the child's progress and experience during these visits through photographs, discussions, or diary entries.
- Only after the child has settled into the new environment will the permanent room move occur. If additional support is needed, the key worker, parent, manager, and room leader will collaborate to provide the necessary assistance.

Starting School

Starting school is a significant transition, and we work to support children through this change:

- The nursery will provide resources that simulate the school environment (e.g., school uniforms, role-play areas, and school photos) to familiarise the children with the concept.
- Representatives from local schools may be invited to visit the nursery to meet the children and answer any questions.
- Key workers will discuss the transition with children, addressing any concerns they may have and providing opportunities to talk about their feelings.
- A comprehensive report will be prepared for each child starting school, detailing their interests, strengths, and development, to help ease the transition for teachers.

Supporting Children Through Family Changes

Family Breakdowns

The nursery recognises that family separations can be a challenging time for children. We are committed to acting in the best interests of the child and supporting them through this difficult transition:

- We will encourage children to express their feelings and concerns, providing a safe space for open discussion.
- We will communicate with parents to ensure the child's emotional needs are supported both at nursery and at home.
- The nursery will adhere to the Separated Families Policy and work with parents to ensure the child's well-being is prioritised.

In the case of family breakdowns, the nursery will:

- Ensure the child's welfare is always the top priority.
- Comply with Court Orders, provided a copy is included in the child's file.
- Keep both parents informed about the child's progress and well-being.
- Treat both parents with equal respect, ensuring neutrality in any disputes.
- Maintain confidentiality in matters relating to family issues.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Provide information about parental responsibilities, Court Orders, and any changes to these arrangements.
- Update the nursery on any relevant changes as soon as possible.
- Collaborate with us to ensure continuity of care for the child.

Moving Home and New Siblings

When children are preparing for significant life changes such as moving home or welcoming a new sibling, we offer additional support:

- Parents are encouraged to notify the nursery in advance to ensure we can support the child through these transitions.
- Staff will engage the child in discussions, role-playing, and activities that help them express any concerns or feelings related to the changes.

- Parents may consider increasing their child's nursery sessions to provide consistency and stability during these changes.

Bereavement

We understand that bereavement can be a particularly difficult time for children and their families. The nursery has a separate Bereavement Policy to guide our approach to offering support during such times. We are committed to providing compassionate support to both children and families experiencing loss.

Additional Support

If parents feel their child requires additional support due to any life changes, we encourage them to speak directly with the nursery manager and key worker. Together, we will develop an individualised plan to ensure the child receives the support they need.

At First Steps we are dedicated to helping children navigate transitions in their early years with empathy and understanding, fostering a sense of security during times of change.

Use of Dummies in Nursery Policy

This policy outlines our approach to the use of dummies in the nursery. We recognise that dummies can provide comfort for young children, especially during sleep or when they are upset. However, we also understand the potential impact of prolonged dummy use on a child's language development and overall oral health.

Aims:

- To provide comfort and reassurance to children when needed.
- To support the development of healthy speech and oral habits.
- To work in partnership with parents regarding the use of dummies.

Understanding the Impact of Dummies:

- Prolonged use of dummies may restrict the mouth movements needed for speech development.
- Babies need opportunities to move their mouths freely, experiment with sounds, smile, and chew food, all of which are essential for language development.

Nursery Guidelines:

- The use of dummies will be discussed with parents as part of each child's individual care plan.
- Dummies will only be used:
 - As a source of comfort when a child is upset.
 - As part of the child's sleep routine.
- Each child's dummy will be stored in a clearly labelled box to prevent cross-contamination.
- Any dummy that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child will be cleaned and sterilised before being returned to the child.

Discouraging Prolonged Dummy Use:

- Staff will encourage children to leave their dummies in a designated area when not needed.
- Children will be comforted and, where age-appropriate, gently reminded that they do not need their dummy at certain times.
- Alternative comfort items, such as a favourite toy, blanket, or teddy, will be offered.
- Staff will provide engaging activities to distract and comfort children.
- Parents will be offered information and support to reduce dummy use, especially as children grow older.

Supporting Parents:

- The nursery will share information with parents about the impact of prolonged dummy use on language development.
- Leaflets or advice will be provided upon request, outlining strategies to reduce or phase out dummy use.
- Staff will respect each family's individual approach to dummy use while encouraging best practices for the child's development.

The use of dummies will be regularly reviewed with parents as part of the child's care plan. This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if needed to ensure it aligns with best practices and advice for child development.

Visits and Outings Policy

We understand that safety is paramount when taking children off the premises, and we are committed to ensuring all outings are well-organised and meet high safety standards. The following guidelines will be followed for every outing, no matter the length or destination:

General Guidelines for All Outings:

1. Parental Permission:
 - Written consent will be obtained from parents before children are taken on any outings or visits off the premises.
2. Staffing and Supervision:
 - The staff-to-child ratio will be carefully planned based on the children's needs and the nature of the outing.
 - At least one member of staff will hold a valid and current paediatric first aid certificate.
 - A fully stocked first aid kit will be taken on every outing, along with any required special medications or equipment for the children.
 - A trip register, will be carried on all outings.
 - Regular headcounts will be carried out during the outing, with set intervals discussed with the nursery manager beforehand.
3. Risk Assessment:
 - A senior staff member will conduct a risk assessment to identify any potential hazards related to the journey or location before the outing.
 - The nursery manager will approve the risk assessment and outing plan prior to the trip.
 - A pre-visit checklist will be completed to ensure the suitability of the venue for the children's age and developmental needs.
4. Visibility and Identification:
 - Staff will wear uniforms to ensure they are easily identifiable.
 - Children will be given a sticker with the nursery name, contact details, and mobile number to help identify them in large groups.
5. Communication:
 - A fully charged mobile phone will be taken to ensure emergency contact if necessary.
 - If an accident occurs, staff will assess the situation, return to the nursery if needed, and contact parents. In case of a serious accident, an ambulance will be called, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital.
6. Large Outings:
 - A detailed outing plan will be prepared for large trips, which will be available for parents to access. This plan will include:
 - Name of the designated outing leader
 - Name and address of the destination
 - Estimated departure and arrival times
 - The number of children, their age range, and the staff-to-child ratio

- Required equipment, including first aid kits, mobile phones, and safety restraints
- Contact details for all staff involved
- Method of transportation and travel arrangements
- Financial arrangements for the outing
- Emergency procedures
- Designated first aider and first aid provisions
- Links to the child's learning and development needs

Use of Vehicles for Outings:

1. Notification and Preparation:
 - Parents will be notified in advance if a visit or outing involves the use of vehicles for transportation.
 - Additional staff or volunteers will be recruited as necessary to ensure the safety and supervision of the children, particularly when accommodating children with disabilities.
2. Vehicle Safety:
 - All vehicles used for transporting children will be properly licensed, inspected, and maintained.
 - The nursery vehicle will be kept in working order, fully insured for business use, and protected by comprehensive breakdown cover.
 - Vehicles will be equipped with safety restraints suitable for the children's age/weight, including three-point seat belts for mini-buses or coaches.
 - When using a mini-bus, the driver will be over 21 years of age and hold a valid P.V.C. driving license for transporting up to 16 passengers.
3. Safety During Transport:
 - Seat belts, child seats, and booster seats will be used in accordance with the children's needs and safety guidelines.
 - The vehicle will not exceed its maximum seating capacity.
 - At least one registered staff member will accompany the children in the vehicle at all times.
 - Under no circumstances will children be left unattended in a vehicle.
 - Extra care will be taken when children are getting in or out of the vehicle to ensure their safety.

Lost Child Procedure:

In the unlikely event of a child being lost during an outing, the following procedure will be followed:

- Immediate action will be taken to locate the child by conducting a thorough search of the area.
- The nursery manager will be informed and assist with the search if necessary.
- The police will be contacted if the child cannot be found quickly.
- The incident will be documented and reported to Ofsted as required.

Incidents and Accidents:

- All accidents, incidents, or near misses during outings will be recorded in writing and shared with Ofsted, as required.

We strive to provide enriching learning experiences for children while maintaining the highest standards of safety and care. Our outings are designed to complement children's development and extend their learning in fun, engaging ways while ensuring they are fully supported and supervised.

Well-being in the Nursery

At First Steps, we are committed to promoting the well-being of all children, families, staff, and visitors. Well-being encompasses physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, all of which are integral to a child's growth and development. Our approach aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), focusing on personal, social, emotional, and physical development.

1. Physical Well-being We ensure children maintain healthy physical development through:

- Regular physical activities indoors and outdoors.
- Balanced, nutritious meals that cater to dietary needs.
- Consistent personal hygiene practices, including handwashing and dental care.
- Designated quiet spaces for rest and relaxation, ensuring appropriate sleep patterns.

2. Mental and Emotional Well-being We foster children's emotional health by:

- Encouraging recognition and expression of emotions through emotional literacy activities.
- Providing supportive, calm spaces for children experiencing strong emotions.
- Teaching self-regulation and coping strategies through structured activities.
- Training staff to identify children who may need additional emotional support.

3. Social Well-being We nurture positive social relationships by:

- Promoting secure attachments with key persons.
- Encouraging respectful interactions with peers.
- Offering a range of play options (individual, pairs, small groups, large groups).
- Teaching compassion, empathy, and acceptance.

4. Spiritual Well-being We support spiritual well-being through:

- Respecting and celebrating diverse values, beliefs, and cultural practices.
- Encouraging self-awareness and positive identity.
- Providing a safe space for children to explore and express their thoughts and beliefs.

5. Staff Well-being and Training

- All staff receive training in supporting children's well-being.
- Regular supervision and support are provided to maintain staff mental health.
- Staff are encouraged to practice self-care and seek help when needed.

6. Partnerships with Parents

- We maintain open communication with parents regarding their child's well-being.
- Parents are encouraged to share any concerns that may impact their child's well-being.
- Our team provides guidance and support to families as needed.

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of children, families, and staff. Feedback from staff and parents is actively sought to enhance our well-being practices.

Whistleblowing Policy

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of care, safety, and professionalism. We encourage all staff to report any concerns that may affect the welfare of children, staff, or the nursery's operations. This policy provides a clear procedure for staff to raise concerns about unethical, unsafe, or illegal practices without fear of retaliation.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing involves reporting concerns about serious misconduct, including:

- Criminal activities (e.g., fraud, theft).
- Violation of legal obligations (e.g., breaches of the EYFS).
- Endangerment to the health and safety of individuals.
- Environmental harm.
- Concealment of any of the above.

Disclosure Procedure

- Staff should first raise concerns with their line manager. If the concern involves the manager, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Tina Woodward).
- If the concern is about child protection, the nursery's Safeguarding Policy must be followed.
- All disclosures will be treated confidentially, and appropriate actions will be taken.
- Staff making disclosures in good faith will not face any form of retaliation.

Escalation Procedure

- If staff believe that their concerns have not been addressed appropriately, they can escalate the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) through completing the online form on the Cheshire East website.

Protection for Whistleblowers

- Staff will not face any detriment for raising concerns in good faith.
- Retaliation against a whistleblower is a disciplinary offense and may lead to dismissal.
- Malicious or false allegations may result in disciplinary action.

Manager Responsibilities

- Ensure that all concerns are taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- Maintain confidentiality of disclosures.
- Support staff who raise concerns and protect them from retaliation.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal requirements.